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AN
EXPOSITION
OF
THE PARABLES
AND OF OTHER PARTS OF
THE GOSPELS,

✓
BY EDWARD GRESWELL, B. D.
FELLOW OF C. C. C. OXFORD.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.
VOL. V. PART I.

OXFORD:
PRINTED BY S. COLLINGWOOD, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY,
FOR J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON.
SOLD BY J. H. PARKER, OXFORD.

MDCCCXXXV.

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ANALYSIS

OF THE

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^a The prophecy on the Mount, properly so called, constitutes the Preliminary Matter to the parables of the Ten Virgins and the Ten Talents respectively. As such, the exposition of it is comprehended under that general title, in the table of contents prefixed to the present volume. The importance of the prophecy, however, in every point of view, induces the author to think that a more particular analysis of the contents of this portion of his work, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

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PARABLE TWENTY-FOURTH.
ALLEGORICAL.

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN, OR OF THE
VINEYARD.

MATTHEW, XXI. 33—44. MARK, XII. 1—11. LUKE, XX. 9—18.
HARMONY, IV. 68.

MATTHEW, XXI. 33—44.

“³³ Hear ye another parable. There was a certain man, a
“ master of an house, who planted a vineyard, and put a fence
“ about it, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and
“ let it out to husbandmen, and went abroad. ³⁴ And when
“ the season of fruits drew nigh, he sent his servants to the
“ husbandmen, to receive its fruits. ³⁵ And the husbandmen
“ having taken his servants, beat one *of them*, and killed another,
“ and stoned another. ³⁶ Again, he sent other servants, more
“ than the first: and they did unto them in like wise. ³⁷ And
“ afterwards he sent unto them his own son, saying, They will
“ reverence my son. ³⁸ But the husbandmen, when they had
“ seen the son, began to say in themselves, This *man* is the heir ;
“ come, let us kill him, and let us keep possession of his inhe-
“ rittance. ³⁹ And they took him, and cast *him* out of the vine-
“ yard, and killed *him*. ⁴⁰ When, therefore, the lord of the
“ vineyard is come, what will he do unto those husband-
“ men ?” ⁴¹ They say to him, “ Wicked *as they are* he will
“ destroy them according to their wickedness, and the vineyard
“ he will let out to other husbandmen, who will render him the
“ fruits in their seasons.” ⁴² Jesus saith unto them, “ Have ye
“ never read in the Scriptures, As to the stone, which they that

“ were building reprobated, this is become for *the* head of a corner? This *head* is become *so* of the Lord; and it is wonderful in our eyes. ⁴³ For this reason, I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation, producing the fruits thereof. ⁴⁴ And he that hath fallen upon this stone, shall be dashed to pieces: and on whomsoever it may fall, it shall grind him to powder.”

MARK xii. 1—11.

¹ And he began to speak to them in parables, saying, “ A man planted a vineyard, and put a fence about it, and dug a receptacle under the wine-press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went abroad. ² And at the *proper* season, he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. ³ And they having taken him, beat *him*, and sent *him* away empty. ⁴ And again he sent to them another servant; and that servant they stoned and wounded in the head, and sent away shamefully treated. ⁵ And again he sent another: and that servant they killed: and many others *treated they like-wise*, beating some, and killing others. ⁶ Having, therefore, still one son, his own beloved *one*, he sent him also unto them, last, saying, They will reverence my son. ⁷ But those men, the husbandmen, began to say unto themselves, This is the heir; come let us kill him, and his inheritance shall be ours. ⁸ And they took him and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard. ⁹ What therefore, will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come, and will destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Have ye not read even this scripture? As to the stone, which they that were building reprobated, this is become for *the* head of a corner. ¹¹ This *head* is become *so* of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes.”

LUKE xx. 9—13.

⁹ And he began to speak unto the people, this parable: “ A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went abroad a long time. ¹⁰ And in due time he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that they might give him of the fruit of the vineyard. But the husbandmen beat him and sent *him* away empty. ¹¹ And he proceeded to send another servant: and they having beaten that *servant* also, and shame-

“ fully treated *him*, sent *him* away empty. ¹² And he proceeded “ to send a third : and they wounded this *servant* also, and cast “ him out. ¹³ And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I “ do ? I will send my son, my beloved : it may be, when they “ have seen him they will reverence *him*. ¹⁴ And when the “ husbandmen had seen him, they began to reason with them- “ selves, saying, This *man* is the heir ; come, let us kill him, “ that his inheritance may become ours. ¹⁵ And having cast “ him out of the vineyard, they killed *him*. What, therefore, “ will the lord of the vineyard do to them ? ¹⁶ He will come, “ and will destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard “ to others.” And when they had heard *this*, they said, “ God “ forbid.” ¹⁷ And he looked steadfastly at them, and said, “ What “ then is this which is written ? As to the stone, which they “ that were building reprobated, this is become for *the* head of a “ corner. ¹⁸ Every one that hath fallen upon that same stone, “ shall be dashed to pieces : and on whomsoever it may fall, it “ shall grind him to powder.”

MATERIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE existence of a vineyard, which might be cultivated by its owner for himself, or let out to others in his stead, being the first thing necessary to the transaction, recorded in the parable ; the formation of the vineyard is the first circumstance specified in the order of its particulars : and the formation of a vineyard implying the conversion of a certain portion of a larger estate to the particular purpose of the culture of the vine, it is naturally attributed to some proper person, who being described as the master of an house, may well be supposed an owner of property in land.

The particulars of the formation, enumerated by two of the Evangelists, succeed each other in a very appropriate order. The planting of the vineyard,

that is, the selection of a convenient spot, within which to plant and cultivate the vine, was naturally prior to the surrounding it with a fence; the provision of a fence for it, to the construction of a wine-press within it; and the formation of a wine-press, (as one of the most indispensable requisites to the integrity of every vineyard,) to the erection of a tower, as another of its component parts.

These several parts of the vineyard have so obviously their proper use, that it is almost superfluous to point it out in any one instance^a. The fence

^a There is a well-known description of a Jewish vineyard, and its component parts, Isaiah v. 1, 2, which deserves to be compared with this in the parable.

“¹ Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. ² And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein:” &c. The words *fenced it*, in this description, are rendered in the margin more agreeably to the Hebrew, *made a wall about it*, which brings that part of the description nearer also to the language of the parable. That the vineyard of Isaiah had a wall about it, appears from verse 5.

Proverbs, xxiv. 30, 31, allusion occurs to the stone wall, about the vineyard of the sluggard, as out of repair and broken down. According to Mr. Harmer, i. 456. chap. v. obs. xvi., stone walls are still common about vineyards in the East, besides fences of living materials.

He observes from Hasselquist, *loc. cit.* that jackals are numerous in Palestine, and very troublesome and injurious, especially in the time of vintage, often destroying whole vineyards, and fields of cucumbers. These animals, we are told by the same author, had their runs and habitations in the live fences, which he observed round about Joppa.

That the same animals abounded in Palestine, in more ancient

would be wanted to define its limits, to protect it from trespass, or to preserve it from the encroachments of various kinds of animals, which in Judæa were liable to infest vineyards. The possession of a wine-press would be so essential to the final end of cultivating the vine, which is the conversion of its fruit into wine, that it might be unnecessary to allude to it, except to point out the nature of the provision for that purpose, as distinctly intimated by St. Mark's account, but implied only in St. Mat-

times, and were equally liable to injure vineyards and their productions then also, may be collected from the Song of Solomon, ii. 15: for the "foxes, the little foxes," there spoken of, are most probably the same with these jackals of Hasselquist. Cf. Judges xv. 4: Lament. v. 19: Ezek. xiii. 4: Nehemiah iv. 3. Not but that the fox, properly so called, is notoriously liable to infest vineyards, and to prey upon their fruit, wherever it is cultivated.

Among animals the most injurious to vineyards, Ps. lxxx. 13. mentions the wild boar out of the wood; and that too is known to have abounded in Palestine. No doubt enemies of this description weré not to be effectually excluded except by fences, made of stone: though vineyards, under some circumstances, might have hedges of quick materials, such as Harmer specifies, iv. 83. ch. viii. Obs. cxxx., thorns, rosebushes, pomegranates, &c.

There is a beautiful description of a vineyard in Theocritus' first Idyllium, in which the hedge about it makes a part of its formation, and the fox preying upon its productions is a prominent figure in the description.

Τυτθὸν δ' ὄσσον ἄπωθεν ἀλιτρώτιο γέροντος,
 πυρναίαις σταφυλαῖσι καλὸν βέβριθεν ἄλωά.
 τὰν ὀλίγος τις κῶρος ἐφ' αἰμασιαῖσι φυλάσσει
 ἤμενος· ἀμφὶ δέ μιν δὺ' ἀλώπεκες· ἅ μὲν ἀν' ὄρχως
 φοιτῆ, σινομένα τὰν τρώξιμον· ἅ δ' ἐπὶ πῆραν
 πάντα δόλον τεύχοισα, τὸ παιδίον οὐ πρὶν ἀήσειν
 φατὶ, πρὶν ἢ ἰκρύτιστον ἐπὶ ξηροῖσι καθίξῃ.

Idyll. i. 45.

thew's. Besides the apparatus for crushing the fruit, and extracting its juice, a vat was necessary to receive the must, or juice expressed, which must either make part of the same apparatus as the press, or be connected in some manner with it. In the hot climate of Judæa it was of much importance that the fresh juice should be preserved in a cool state, during the subsequent process of fermentation; for which purpose, even when the wine-press was in the open air, or on the ground, the wine-vat consisted of a pit sunk into the earth, or a cistern excavated from the rock. Such appears to have been the case in the present instance; for while St. Matthew tells us, that the owner of the vineyard digged a wine-press, (*ληνόν*.) which is the general name of the apparatus in question collectively; St. Mark mentions, that he digged a vat beneath the press, (*ὑπολήμιον*.) which is the proper name for the receptacle of the juice, when it had passed through the press, in particular^b.

^b The distinction between the *ληνός* and the *ὑπολήμιον* is recognised in this passage from Florentinus, one of the authors quoted in the Geoponica, lib. vi. cap. 1: *δεῖ τοίνυν τὸν ληνὸν πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος τῶν συγκομίζεσθαι μελλόντων καρπῶν, οἰκοδομεῖν, ὥστε ἐπάρεχαι τοῖς ἐργαζομένοις ἱκανὴν ἀναστροφὴν* κ', τ. λ. Then, *τὸ δὲ ὑπολήμιον ἔστω πλατύστομον*, κ', τ. λ. The *ληνός* in Latin is *toreular*; the *ὑπολήμιον* answers to that which in the descriptions or allusions of the Latin poets, is expressed by the *lacus*, or receptacle of the juice, when squeezed out by the feet or hands of the treaders of the press, in the *toreular*.

Diodorus Siculus, xiii. 83: describes the *πελειῶν* or wine cellar of Gellias, a wealthy citizen of Agrigentum in Sicily, as follows: *εἶναι ἐν αὐτῷ τριακοσίους μὲν πίθους, ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς πέτρας τετρημένους, ἕκαστον ἑκατὸν ἀμφορείς χωροῦντα· κολυμβήθραν δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς ὑπάρχειν κεκοιμημένην, χωροῦσαν ἀμφορείς χιλίους, ἐξ ἧς τὴν ῥίσιον εἰς τοὺς πίθους γίνεσθαι*. Supposing the *πίθει* in this account to have

The construction of the tower, as another constituent part of the vineyard, might be accounted for, either by supposing it intended to be a storehouse of the fruit, a receptacle for the working implements, required in its culture, a lodging for its curator, and a proper place in which to keep guard over it; or by considering it an appendage, designed as much for pleasure and embellishment as for utility and convenience. The possession of towers might be a luxury not absolutely essential to the integrity of a vineyard, and so far characteristic of the gardens or vineyards of the rich^c. The provi-

been analogous to the pipes, or receptacles of the wine itself, as soon as it was ready; the *κολυμβήθρα* would answer to the *lacus* or *ἵπολῆμιον*, in which the juice was received, as soon as extracted—to undergo the process of fermentation, and to be converted into wine.

Here the *πίθοι* were vats hewn out of the rock; and the *κολυμβήθρα*, a plastered structure, probably of the same kind. According to sir John Chardin, wine-presses in Persia are still hollow places made in the ground, and lined with mason's work: Harmer, i. 392. chap. iv. obs. xlix.

^c Isaiah i. 8, the following allusions occur; “And the daughter of Sion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers:” upon which Jerome's commentary, iii. 12. *ad calcem*, is, *Similitudo autem vastationis Templi et Jerusalem sumta est ab agricolis, qui quamdiu vinea uvarum plena est, ponunt custodes in umbraculis. in cucumerario quoque, quod LXX pomorum custodiam vocant, parvulæ fiunt casulæ propter ardorem solis et radios declinandos: et inde vel homines, vel bestiolas quæ insidiari solent natis frugibus, abigunt.* That the cucumber fields were liable to be infested by animals, appears from the note at page 4, just before. In his commentary on Isaiah v. *Operum* iii. 46. *ad calcem*, also, he observes on the part of the description relating to the tower, *Ædificavi firmissimam turrim, in qua fruges reconderem; et de qua insidiantes frugibus bestias contemplerar.*

sion of such an appendage, therefore, over and above the other particulars of the constitution of the vineyard, in the present instance, would serve as a proof of the great care and pains bestowed on its forma-

It is most probable, then, that the first and proper use of these towers in vineyards was for these two purposes, of receiving the fruit, and of keeping watch over the vineyard. In other respects, the existence of such buildings in vineyards, would seem to be only a part of a much more general custom than its existence in almost all parts of the country, especially the desert, or less inhabited parts; and the use to which they were put for the purpose of keeping watch in vineyards, to be the same to which they were put under all circumstances of their situation, as a station for watchmen, in the discharge of their proper duty. Thus towers were built by Uzziah in the desert, in all probability as places of observation, and a means of security against danger, in behalf of the flocks and herds, and their keepers, at certain seasons of the year: see 2 Chron. xxvi. 9, 10. Thus too we meet with the expression, "from the tower of the watchman to the fenced city;" 2 Kings xviii. 8, which leads to the same conclusion. Cf. generally, Gen. xxxv. 21: Judges viii. 17; ix. 46, 47, 49: 2 Sam. xviii. 18: 2 Kings ix. 17: Canticles iv. 4; vii. 4; viii. 10: Isaiah ii. 15; xxi. 5; xxxii. 14: Jerem. xxxi. 38: Micah iv. 8: Habakk. ii. 1: Zechar. xiv. 10: Nehemiah iii. 1, 11, 25—27; xii. 38, 39.

It may very well be presumed, however, that if our Saviour, Luke xiv. 28, alludes to one of these towers, wont to be erected in vineyards or gardens; as it is most probable that he does; they were luxuries, as well as conveniences, not necessarily essential to the integrity of a vineyard, and both requiring and implying a certain degree of affluence to build them and to possess them. It appears too, from Mr. Harmer, ii. 241, 242, chap. viii. obs. xxi. that a kiosk, or tower, designed for ornament and pleasure, as much as for use or convenience, always has been a common part of the furniture of a vineyard or a garden in the East; that much pains is taken to decorate and embellish these buildings, and that their owners, with their families, are accustomed to spend in them the greatest part of their leisure time, especially in the summer season.

tion by its owner ; and of his desire to render it as perfect as possible. A vineyard so furnished would possess more than enough for the ordinary integrity of vineyards; in which case, whatever was properly the business of its owner, and naturally to be expected beforehand from him, in order to the disposal of it subsequently in any proper way—it must be confessed would have been abundantly performed ; and with respect to this vineyard, the same question might be asked, which the prophet Isaiah puts, under circumstances much the same, in behalf of another ; ‘ What more could the owner have done ‘ for it, that he had not done already?’ And this, we may presume, is the conviction designed to be produced by the minute description of its formation, preliminary to the rest of its history.

After the plantation of a vineyard, for its usual purpose, the next step to the attainment of that end, is the cultivation of it ; a part of the process which must either be the work of the owner, or of others engaged in his stead. The formation of parts of their estates into vineyards, and the letting them out subsequently to be farmed, were equally of common occurrence in Judæa, and wherever else the wealth of the rich, or the owners of land, consisted of income derived from such possessions, as much as from any other source^d. It is supposed that such is the disposal which the owner of the vineyard makes of

^d Thus we find it observed, Song of Solomon, i. 6 : “ They “ made me keeper of the vineyards ; but mine own vineyard “ have I not kept :” whence it appears that it was usual, among the Jews, for the rich to commit the possession of their vineyards to keepers. See further, chap. viii. 11.

his property in the present instance ; viz. not to cultivate it for himself, but to commit it to others, to be cultivated by them in his stead. The choice of such persons would necessarily rest with him ; and in fixing upon them, it is to be presumed, that he would not only select whom he himself might think best, but would exercise a sound discretion in making choice of such as were likely to answer the confidence reposed in them.

From this time forward, then, another description of persons begins to be concerned in the œconomy of the parabolic transaction, whose proper character is determined by the peculiarity of their relation to the vineyard, as the husbandmen by whom it is cultivated, on the one hand, and to the owner of the vineyard, as his representatives in the possession of it, on the other. The relation henceforward subsisting between the persons concerned in the parable, is consequently that of principal and subordinate ; because it is that of the landlord, and the tenants, of one and the same property in land. And as the vineyard itself could have no being, until it was planted, nor the lord of the vineyard that particular character, until he was possessed of one : so neither could the husbandmen have any being in their proper capacity as the farmers of the vineyard, until they had been appointed his tenants by its landlord, and had been placed in possession of it in his stead.

The relation of landlord and tenant, in order to be contracted between the proper parties, supposes the stipulation, usual in all such cases, to be deliberately made and agreed to on both sides beforehand ; without which, it is not to be imagined that the

owner of property in land, would transfer the use and possession of it to any besides himself. It is the object of all these contracts to provide for the interest and advantage of both parties in the relation, in proportion to their respective claims; so that while the rights of the principal party, as the owner of the soil, are first and principally consulted, the subordinate parties also, who cultivate his property for him, may find their benefit in it. It follows too, by virtue of the preliminary stipulation which must have preceded, before the relation of landlord and tenant could be contracted in a particular instance; that the recognition of the rights of the principal party in such cases cannot be left to the discretion of the subordinate, but by their own contract, it has become binding upon them: nor can they refuse to acknowledge these rights, after the relation in question has once been contracted, without being guilty of a deliberate breach of faith, and unjustly usurping or withholding what belongs to another.

Whether the returns which the tenants would be bound to render to the landlord, in consequence of the covenant between them, should be paid in money, or in kind, must depend on the nature of their agreement. In either case, the returns must be rendered and received, as the *rent* of the vineyard. The parable specifies no more, than that the owner of the vineyard expected to receive, and therefore by the nature of his covenant must have been entitled to receive, of the fruits of the vineyard. But the word which expresses these fruits, is capable of standing for the income derived from any species of property, and as productive in any way^e. The vine-

^e That vineyards were let out in Judea for a pecuniary rent,

yard of Solomon was let out to keepers, who paid a pecuniary rent for it. And though the same thing should be understood of the return due to the landlord in the parable; it would be equally correct to say that the mission of the proper persons, to enforce his claims, and to receive his dues, whensoever that took place, was both at such a time, "when the season of fruits drew nigh," and for such a purpose, as "to receive of the fruit of the vineyard." The time when vineyards ripen their fruits is as proper to be the time when these dues should be paid, whether in money or in kind, as any; and anciently seems to have been the time expressly appropriated by landlords to reckoning with their tenants ^f.

or might be so, appears from the Song of Solomon, viii. 11: "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof, was to bring a thousand pieces of silver." It appears from the next verse, that the keepers themselves derived a profit of two hundred pieces of silver, from their engagement; "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me; thou, O Solomon, *must have* a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred."

I should understand Isaiah vii. 23, also of the same thing in general; the rent derived from the produce of the vine, as let out to persons farming it: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns." If a vineyard was large enough to contain a thousand vines, then at this rate of a piece of silver for every vine, the rent of such a vineyard would be a thousand pieces of silver, as that of Solomon's at Baal-hamon was.

^f If the practice of Pliny the younger, with respect to the disposal of the produce of his estates, may be taken as a specimen of the practice of Roman landlords in his time, in general; then it appears that it was his custom to visit his estates in the country, when he had occasion to let them, in the autumnal season; that these estates were principally his vineyards; and

The next circumstance in the order of the narrative, the departure of the owner from his own coun-

the terms on which he disposed of them were such and such an annual rent, as the value of their productions: which he calls his *vindemiae*.

Thus, *Epistolarum lib. vii. 30, 3*: writing to one of his friends, when he was in the country upon an occasion of this sort, and holding an audit with his farmers, he says, *Accedunt querelæ rusticorum, qui auribus meis post longum tempus suo jure abutuntur. instat et necessitas agrorum locandorum, perquam molesta. adeo rarum est invenire idoneos conductores.* Again, *viii. 2, 1*: *Alii in prædia sua proficiscuntur, ut locupletiores revertantur; ego, ut pauperior. vendideram vindemias certatim negotiatoribus ementibus. invitabat pretium; et quod tunc, et quod fore videbatur. spes fefellit.* Again, *ix. 28, 2*: *Indicas etiam, modicas te vindemias collegisse. communis hæc mihi tecum, quamquam in diversissima parte terrarum, querela est.* Again, *ix. 37*: *Præsertim quum me necessitas locandorum prædiorum, plures annos ordinatura, detineat; in quo mihi nova consilia sumenda sunt. nam priore lustro, quamquam post magnas remissiones, reliqua creverunt: iude plerisque nulla jam cura minuendi æris alieni, quod desperant posse persolvi; rapiunt etiam, consumuntque, quod natum est, ut qui jam putent se non sibi parcere. occurrendum ergo augescentibus vitiis, et medendum est. medendi una ratio, si non nummo, sed partibus locem, ac deinde ex meis aliquos exactores operi, custodes fructibus ponam: et alioqui nullum justius genus redditus, quam quod terra, cælum, annus refert.*

For the chronology of the Epistles of Pliny, see my Supplementary Dissertations, Dissertation xii. p. 200—223. It appears plainly from this last passage, that Pliny's farmers were strictly the cultivators of his estates, by whose care and labour their productions were to be raised and brought to maturity; but that the fruits of their labour, the productions of his vineyards themselves, or whatever else they might be, were his—and in some manner or other to be accounted for to him. This would answer very exactly to the state of the case in the parable, between the owner of the vineyard, and the husbandmen who were engaged to cultivate it for him.

try, and his subsequent residence abroad, which is supposed to ensue immediately after the conclusion of the covenant with the husbandmen, and their being placed in possession of the vineyard, cannot be shewn, indeed, to be any necessary consequence of what had preceded; but it serves a variety of important purposes for the sake of what follows: so much so, that without this preliminary step, the rest of the history, from this time forward, could not possibly be conceived to have happened.

In the mean while, we may observe upon this part of the parabolic œconomy, that whatever cause might require the departure of the owner of the vineyard from home—after having done all that could be considered incumbent upon an owner, both in providing his vineyard with every necessary to its integrity, and making choice, as it might be presumed, of trusty persons, to take charge of it, and stipulating for the acknowledgment of his own rights and claims, as the landlord, as well as for those of the husbandmen, as the tenants; he had done all which its owner, up to this point of time, could be expected to do—all which could be considered to require his personal presence, and personal agency, in that capacity. With respect to the rest, the husbandmen must be left for a time to themselves; and in the discharge of their stipulated part, as his tenants, had no need of his own presence, and much less of his own superintendence, as their landlord.

The first consequence of the departure of the owner of the vineyard, into another country, immediately after the conclusion of a formal contract, which binds the husbandmen to the performance of

certain duties in behalf of the vineyard, and of himself, during his absence, is this ; that the husbandmen are placed in such circumstances from thenceforward, that though subject to an acknowledged covenant, and bound to certain definite performances for the observance of their own engagement—they are absolutely left to themselves, and to their own sense of honour, and regard to justice, to render those performances accordingly. The obligations of their covenant would remain the same, whether the owner of the vineyard were at home or abroad ; but the opportunities afforded for the breach of their engagement, and the kind of temptation to the disregard and neglect of their proper duty to which they might be liable, would not be the same, whether their master were present or absent. It would be absurd to suppose, that their covenant could be deliberately broken, and their duty deliberately disregarded, under the eye of their master ; at least with impunity to themselves ; but the very circumstance that he was not at hand to observe and to resent on the spot, their misconduct, might become the moving cause to the possible breach of their covenant, and the possible neglect of their duty, in his absence.

It is an effect then, of the departure of the principal person from home, that it places the subordinate persons in a state of probation, and tries them for a certain time, by the use and administration of a certain responsible trust. The beginning of this œconomy bears date from the time of his departure, and the close of it must as evidently coincide with his return. Its duration in the mean while is co-extensive with the period of his absence : and the enjoyment of the trust, which begins as soon as the

husbandmen are actually placed in the possession of the vineyard, instead of its owner, followed by his own departure abroad, necessarily continues to be retained by them, so long as he remains from home; but whether it should continue to be retained by them after his return, must depend on the use they should be found to have made of it, during his absence. This use might be such as justly to entitle them to the continuance of their present relation; and it might be such as necessarily to require it to be taken from them: but whether their trust should be used or abused, and consequently which of these ultimate effects was to be expected from its present enjoyment, must be left to the event to determine.

Nor do the parties in the contract separate, the principal personage to go abroad, the inferior ones to enter upon the discharge of their proper duties at home—without a perfect understanding of their mutual rights and mutual obligations. The subordinate parties know that so long as they retain possession of his vineyard, they are bound to respect the just claims of its owner; and so long as they continue to respect those claims, that they have no right to be dispossessed of the usufruct of his vineyard. The principal party knows that so long as his tenants continue to respect his own claims, as their landlord, he is bound to respect their rights, as his tenants; and as he could have no inducement, so neither, it may be presumed, could he feel any inclination, to take away the enjoyment of their trust from them, and to transfer it to others. And if the parties in a common relation separate with this understanding of their mutual claims, it is to

be supposed that both, at least for a time, were equally willing to observe them ; and if any thing transpires, in the course of their connection subsequently, which evinces a contrary disposition in either of the parties, it must be resolvable into causes, which could have no being prior to their separation, and first began to operate with the occasion of the separation itself.

The possession of the vineyard by the husbandmen, for the time being, even upon such terms as we must suppose to have been previously made by the owner in his own behalf, and the privilege of standing in the relation of his tenants, as entailed by their contract with him—was no doubt a valuable possession, in which the temporary occupants themselves found their own account, and a desirable privilege, which was not to be lightly endangered or forfeited. The very nature of the contract of landlord and tenants, supposes an equal regard to the interests of both parties, in their just proportion ; and while ample provision is made for the benefit of the owner of the soil, as in strictness entitled to the larger share of a common advantage—some due compensation is still reserved for the labours of those who cultivate it in his behalf. Solomon derived a profit of one thousand pieces of silver from his vineyard at Baal-hamon ; but its keepers one of two hundred. And in proportion as the possession of the vineyard was valuable in itself, and the relation of tenants to the owner was a privilege of a certain kind ; the mere deprivation of the vineyard, and the consequent loss of the relation entailed by its possession, would be in the same proportion, a de-

gree of punishment, to which the misconduct of the temporary possessors, though it might go no further than the simple abuse of the duties of their trust, without any aggravation of ill-usage, would still be liable, on the principle of the proper retribution in kind, for a proper corresponding offence.

After the departure of the owner, there are three periods in the œconomy of the parable ; one, during which the proper action of the history slumbers ; another, at which it is broken off ; and a third, during which the course of events, so far as the narrative enters into detail, and is continued without interruption, may be said to begin and proceed. The first of these periods extends from the departure of the owner, to the mission of the first of the servants ; the second, from the mission of the first of the servants to that of the son ; the third, from the mission of the son to the implied return of the owner. The purposes to which the corresponding parts of the action, comprehended by them, are respectively subservient, are as determinate as the periods themselves. During the first, the fruit is advancing to maturity, but its season, before which the claims of the owner upon the husbandmen, could not begin to be enforced, is not yet fully come ; during the second, the enforcement of the claims of the owner has been formally begun, and is still going on ; during the third, there is an end to the further enforcement of the claims of the owner, but the guilt of the husbandmen, incurred by their systematic resistance to those claims, and the excesses to which it led, has not yet been adequately resented and punished. Before the maturity of the fruit, the demands of the

owner to his share of the produce of the vineyard, could not consistently be preferred; nor after it, be lawfully resisted. Before the assertion of his claims on the one hand, and the refusal to acknowledge or respect them on the other, there could be no proof of any injury done to him, or of any guilt incurred by the husbandmen—requiring a proper redress on his part, or deserving a proper punishment on theirs: but after the proof of both these things, as declared by the event, in the intermediate transaction of particulars between the mission of the first of the servants, and the death of the son, the necessity of some reparation for a cumulative series of wrongs, being now only too indisputable, the fact of this redress thenceforward, was only too certainly to be expected. Hence, as the departure of the owner was necessary to place the husbandmen in a state of probation, and to give them an opportunity of incurring a good or an evil desert (at his own hands) of a certain kind; so was his return as indispensable, under the circumstances of the case, to begin an œconomy of retribution, critically adapted to the preceding œconomy of probation, and resenting the evil desert acquired at his hands, accordingly.

The time taken up by the first of these periods, extends from the plantation of the vineyard to the first instance of the maturity of its fruits; between which, the ordinary course of nature would require a certain interval, not less than a year. The time comprehended by the second, reaches from the mission of the first of the servants to that of the son of the owner; an interval, which the purpose to which it is devoted, shews to have been of definite extent, as the beginning and the close of one and the same

œconomy, during which the assertion of the claims of the owner, his successive attempts to effect one object—the recognition of those claims by the husbandmen—and the failure of them all, through their obstinacy and impenitence, is going on, and illustrated by the result. The time occupied by the third, is comprised between the death of the son of the owner, and his own return in person, to take vengeance on his murderers, and to let out the vineyard before possessed by them, to other husbandmen, more worthy of it; an interval, which like the last, as devoted to one object, and to that one alone, must be of determinate extent, and whether longer or shorter in itself, not more than adequate for the end proposed.

The mission of the servants of the owner of the vineyard, (who besides his character in relation to the vineyard, was described as the master of an household also,) is the introduction of a new order of persons, among the agents concerned in the parabolic transaction; the first cause of which is to be attributed to the absence of the owner of the vineyard from home, and yet, the season of the fruit being now come, the necessity of enforcing his rights, as the owner of the vineyard, at the proper time. The personal character of these messengers, before the time of their mission, is that of the servants of the owner, in his capacity of master of an household; a character which being prior to any other that might be superinduced upon it, would be independent of any such also, and capable of consisting with it: after the time of their mission, it is that of those who besides being the subordinate members of the

family of the owner, act in his stead, and represent his person, as the lord of the vineyard also. From the time of their mission, they appear in the character of his vicegerents, and sustain the part of his deputies to the husbandmen, the tenants of his vineyard. The duty which they have to discharge is that of enforcing their master's rights—the claim which they make to the fruits of the vineyard, or to a certain portion of them, is made in his behalf: and considered in this point of view, resistance to their demands becomes resistance to the demands of their master—an insult or an injury offered to them, is an insult or an injury offered to their master. The personal office of all these servants, whatever be the number who are sent, and whatever the order of succession in which they are sent, like their personal relation to their master, is consequently one and the same. Even the official character of the son, as sent upon the same errand with the servants, notwithstanding the superior dignity of his personal relation to the owner of the vineyard, was nothing distinct from theirs. He too, in coming on such an errand, was but his father's vicegerent, as well as the servants: he too, was but his father's messenger to the tenants of his vineyard, like one of them.

The cause of the mission of the first of this new order of persons, might be the arrival of the season of the fruits of the vineyard, that is the proper period when its fruits were ripe, and its productiveness was to be judged of from the event; at which time, the owner of the vineyard as the landlord, and the husbandmen as the farmers and tenants, might most fitly begin to look each for their proper share

of the benefit of its fertility. But the cause of the mission of the servants next in order, is not only this consideration, but the additional necessity imposed by the failure of the first mission, to make renewed attempts for the attainment of the same object. The claim of the owner to his own share of the fruits of the vineyard remained the same, whether it was acknowledged by the husbandmen or not; but when it had once been made by him, and once rejected by them, if it was not to be abandoned altogether, the failure of the first application would necessarily lead to a second. Had the first messenger succeeded, there would have been no occasion for another; much less, if the ministry of the servants previously had been found sufficient for the desired effect, would it have been necessary to enforce the same object at last, by the mission of the son. In all these cases, the failure of a preceding experiment, leads to the adoption of a fresh expedient, in the hope of better success; there being no alternative, under the circumstances of the case, except one of these three; either to abandon the prosecution of the claims of the lord of the vineyard, with the first refusal of the husbandmen to acknowledge them, or to return and inflict summary punishment upon them, for the first display of their dishonesty and breach of faith, or if they were yet to be borne with, in the hope of being brought to a sense of their duty at last, to reinforce the same demands by a repetition of similar messages.

If, then, the conduct attributed to the husbandmen, in the reception which they give both to the original demands of the owner, and still more to

every subsequent reiteration of his claims, should be objected to, as unnatural and improbable ; unnatural we may well allow it to be, in the sense of ungrateful, and wicked ; but improbable, much less impossible, we cannot believe it. No representation can properly be considered improbable, which is agreeable to an actual matter of fact ; and it would be abundantly sufficient to justify the circumstances of the fictitious history, in all that relates to the conduct of the husbandmen, monstrous and unnatural as it may appear, that they who are represented by these husbandmen, did actually pursue the line of conduct ascribed to them, in their behaviour to those who are to be understood by the servants. But, indeed, the testimony of daily experience is enough to prove that there is no degree of wickedness to which men, when left to themselves, and to the influence of their own evil passions, may not gradually be brought. The circumstances in which, from the time of the personal departure of the owner, the husbandmen were placed, by relieving them from all sense of present responsibility, and all apprehension of future ill consequences, were liable to make them forgetful of the nature of their tenure, or indifferent to the obligations imposed by it ; and might dispose them to treat the very mention of the claims of a master, with ridicule and contempt, if not with violence and outrage. The mere sense of honour, the unassisted force of principle, is but a weak and inadequate restraint, when opposed by the temptation of immediate gain, encouraged by the prospect of impunity. The owner of the vineyard was gone away, and had been now long absent ; and for ought which appeared to the contrary, might never return.

His vineyard had been all this time in possession of the husbandmen; and undisturbed possession might seem to have made it their own. Its nominal owner, if he was still in being, was asserting his claim to it not in person, but by messengers; and that was some argument, that he could not, or would not, come back to assert it himself. His messengers had not the power or authority of a master over his tenants; and if they could not give effect to their mission by the mere weight of character, and the deference due to the relation which they supported towards their master, they might be defied and insulted with impunity. Besides, the first step, in a series of crimes, ordinarily speaking, is the most difficult of commission; and if that can be got over, the rest will follow, almost as matter of course. Let the husbandmen but once have been capable of treating the first of their landlord's messengers, with scorn and contempt, and their conduct towards the rest is easily accounted for—even while it proceeds from insult to violence, and from scorn and contempt, to personal injury, and death itself. The same principle which led to the first instance of such conduct, could not fail to instigate to the rest, if for no other purpose than to justify and bear out its own act: and like the motion of a body, once put into motion, gathering violence by its own momentum, the longer such conduct continued, the more outrageous it was likely to become.

The causes then, which the history assigns for the effect in question, are such as might have produced it, improbable and extraordinary as it may appear—the desire of unjust gain, and the hope of impunity; the former excited by the present pos-

session of a valuable property, which though belonging to another, these men were determined to make their own, and believed they had an opportunity of doing so; the latter encouraged by the personal absence of its owner, and the presumptive assurance that he could not or would not return to claim it. That it was no forgetfulness of their relation to the owner of the property, or of the terms on which they had been put into possession of it—but on the contrary, a deliberate violation of their engagement, and of the sense of their duty, founded in such considerations as these, appears plainly from the circumstance that they knew the servants of the master to stand in their proper relation to him, even while they refused to acknowledge *them* as the representatives of *his* rights; and when conspiring and carrying into effect the death of his son, they still admitted that the inheritance of the vineyard was his, and could not be securely made their own, except by his death.

And if the part ascribed to the owner of the vineyard should be objected to, on similar grounds, as exceeding the bounds of probability in point of forbearance, under so many, and such reiterated provocations; that too may be defended on the same principle, that the part ascribed to him, however unlikely in itself, was the part actually sustained in a real matter of fact, by the person who is represented as the owner of the vineyard, towards those who are represented by the husbandmen. Independent of any such correspondence, however, the credibility of the parabolic narrative in this respect, may be vindicated on its own grounds, if it be only

admitted that, to the honour of human nature, there may be dispositions in which gentleness, placability, and forbearance, are capable of predominating as much and as constantly on the one hand, as rudeness, ingratitude, and liability to provoke, on the other. Nor can it be doubted that whether purposely designed for the explanation of his conduct, or not, these properties in the character of the principal personage, are singularly contrasted with the opposite qualities in that of the subordinate. No account indeed can be given of the conduct of the owner of the vineyard, from the time that his just claims met with so unexpected a reception from the husbandmen—which does not resolve itself into the effect of unwearied patience, struggling with persevering obstinacy while it was possible for long-suffering to bear with provocation, and forgiveness to keep pace with aggression. Had it been practicable for any degree of condescension, conciliation, and indulgence, to have overcome stubbornness, insolence, rudeness, and inhumanity, which were not absolutely insuperable, the gentleness of the landlord must have achieved this victory over the obstinacy of the tenants. Let us make what allowance we may for the natural partiality which he may be supposed to have entertained for the objects of his own selection—and the natural unwillingness which he might have felt to dispossess them of a privilege of his own bestowing, without the most urgent necessity; this necessity might well be supposed to have made itself felt, and to have more than sufficed to overcome an unwillingness founded in such a motive as that—when the perverseness of the husbandmen had led them to turn a deaf ear to the de-

mands even of the first of his servants, and to send him away empty ; much more, when not content with that, they had proceeded from simple disregard of his claims, to open hostility against them, and the mission of servant after servant was followed by insult upon insult to the master, and outrage upon outrage to the servants. All this, while it establishes the fact of the obstinacy, ingratitude, and impenitence of the husbandmen, beyond the possibility of doubt, is the noblest testimony to the invincible patience, and almost boundless placability of the owner of the vineyard ; who, if he possessed the power of punishing the husbandmen at last, possessed the power of punishing them at first, and if he resented the insults and injuries offered to himself at last, might have resented the indignities offered him at first, had not his resentment been overruled for a time, by his benevolence. Yet nothing but the death of his son, his only, and well beloved son, is powerful enough to rouse his reluctant vengeance—though it would be a calumny to so much goodness and gentleness as his, to suppose he did not sympathise with the treatment of his faithful servants, who had lost their lives in his service, and in the discharge of their own duty ; and the death of his son was a species of provocation, which however inclined he might have been to overlook every thing else, it was impossible that he could forgive ; whatever compensation the husbandmen might have made for any other offence, it was impossible they could atone for this ; whatever hope of amendment there might still be of them, notwithstanding their conduct towards his servants, yet by the perpetration of this crime against his son, their

wickedness was proved to be irreclaimable, and all hope of their amendment to be desperate.

As no demand could be more just and reasonable than the claim of the owner of the vineyard to his proper share of its productions—so the mission of the first of his servants, the sole object of which was to enforce this demand, was naturally to be expected at the proper time; and the success of the mission was naturally to be anticipated even from their sense of its justice to whom it was addressed. The servants that came after the first, might be sent upon the same errand; but there would be this difference between the business of their mission, and that of the first, that they would have to persuade the husbandmen to that compliance with the demands of the owner, on the principle of repentance as well as of justice, which the first of their number had been commissioned to effect, on the score of its own equity and propriety.

The history of the treatment of the servants, as it is described in the parable, can receive no explanation at present; nor any explanation hereafter, but what it must derive from a comparison of that history with the real one, in reference to those whom these servants represent. We may, notwithstanding, observe upon it, that as they have all a similar office to discharge, so they all discharge it in a similar manner, and all more or less meet with the same kind of treatment. And while the uniformity of this treatment in general, is a melancholy proof of the consistency of the offending parties to their own principles from first to last; still it is worthy of remark, as an eminent instance of the attention to

decorum which appears in the narrative, that the effect of such principles, in leading to such results, is supposed to be progressive. It is a common event in the history of the servants, that they are all unsuccessful; that they all fail in the object of their mission. It is not a common event, that they are all put to death. The husbandmen express their disregard of the first application, by sending the messenger of their landlord away empty; or if they are guilty of personal violence towards him, it is that of beating, but not of stoning him. Nor until the mission of fresh servants, do they begin to embrue their hands in blood, and to evince their dislike of the message, or their contempt of its author, by putting the messengers to death. Now this was the course which they might naturally be expected to run; and the use of this continued advancement on their part, to one extremity after another, in the same career of audacity, is to forward the final result, and to prepare us for the death of the son of the owner of the vineyard himself. They who had proceeded to such lengths in their treatment of the servants before, were already predisposed to the exertion of similar violence even towards the son.

This naturally leads us to observe, that to be sent on a mission of this kind, especially after the experience of its results in the first instance, was to be sent on a service of obvious danger. Yet we do not perceive that the consciousness of this fact deters either the lord of the vineyard from being willing to send, or his servants from being willing to be sent, upon the errand in question; the first of which considerations is a striking proof of the gentleness, patience, and forbearance of the master, and the latter of the

courage, devotion, and magnanimity of the servants.

And with respect to the mode in which each of the servants acquits himself of his commission ; it does not appear, that however faithfully and firmly, as became his duty to his master, it was not in the same spirit of mildness and moderation in which it had been imposed upon him. It does not appear that either the first of the number, or any that came after him, had it in charge to trust for the success of their commission, to any arguments but those of reason and justice, entreaty and expostulation. Even the mission of the son is ascribed more to the deference and respect which it might justly be hoped would be inspired by the dignity of his personal character, than to the awe which might be produced by his personal presence and authority. " They will reverence," not, " They will fear my son," is the language attributed to the father, when deliberating upon his mission.

And with respect to the failure of the missions, common as that may be in each instance of their repetition, it does not appear that the claims of the servants, on the part of their master, were ever resisted by the husbandmen, under the idea that these messengers were not, in each instance, what they professed and declared themselves to be, the organs and representatives of the lord of the vineyard. On the contrary, the very treatment which they experience at the hands of the husbandmen, implies the preliminary recognition of their character, as actually coming from such a master, and actually empowered to advance such demands in his behalf. Nor is this conclusion without its importance ; for it proves

that the principle of the resistance to their claims, in every instance, was no doubt of the authority of the messenger, but a total dislike of the message; no good reason to dispute the justice of the demand, but a fixed determination not to allow it.

We may observe, too, on the authority of St. Matthew, that the servants dispatched upon the later missions, are increased in their numbers, and, as it would seem, in the proportionate urgency of their demands; corresponding to which, their treatment by the husbandmen likewise increases in violence and severity. We observe too, that these missions being once begun, there is, for a certain time, an uninterrupted series of them—their order and succession continue unbroken—the errand has no sooner failed in one instance, than it is repeated in another. The mission of the son alone is followed by no more; and the mission of the son was evidently of such a kind, that from the necessity of the case, whether it succeeded or failed, it could be followed by no more. We may infer, then, that up to a certain point of time, the errands of the servants, for a common purpose, once begun, might, and perhaps, must continue; and even the miscarriage of one be no argument that another was unnecessary, or possibly might not succeed. The mission of the first of the servants is consequently the first step, and that of the son is the last in a determinate series of causes, designed for the production of a determinate effect; which as concerns the lord of the vineyard is the acknowledgment of his covenanted rights, as concerns the husbandmen, his tenants, is the observance of their covenanted duties.

The personal description of the son as given by one of the historians of the parable, in particular, represents him as the well-beloved of his father—for this natural reason, that he was his only son. The condescension of the father in sending his only son, and the condescension of the son in being willing to be sent, would have been entitled to the highest praise, and been exemplified in a striking manner, had there been no reason to apprehend any danger to the safety of the messenger even from the fact of the mission itself. But how is our admiration of the condescension of both these parties increased, when we reflect, that in voluntarily sending his son, to bear his last message to the husbandmen, the father was voluntarily exposing his only son to the risk of certain danger; in voluntarily becoming the messenger of his father to his refractory tenants, his only son was voluntarily exposing himself to almost certain death! The experience of the past was sufficient to prove that, after the treatment which the servants of the owner had uniformly received from his tenants; and after the proof which had thus been given of their principles and disposition—and the lengths to which they were capable of proceeding in the same career of violence and usurpation; no one, not even the son of the owner, and the heir of the vineyard, could go to the husbandmen on the same kind of errand as the servants, without the same risk to his safety, or even greater personal danger than any before him. Yet does not this consideration deter the father from sending his son, nor the son from being willing to be sent, on the mission in question; though the father in sending, and the son in consenting to be sent, had before their eyes the failure of

the mission of the servants, and only too much reason, from the operation of the same kind of causes, to anticipate the same kind of effect, in his instance also.

The failure of the mission of the servants, indeed, is so far from acting as a dissuasive to the mission of the son, that it is the very cause, by implication assigned in the parable, as the reason which produced it : a reason, founded upon this principle, not that the master of the vineyard had no more servants belonging to his household, besides those whom he had already sent, and consequently no more to send, if he pleased, still ; but that he had sent so many, in the capacity simply of his servants, and so many, as the event had proved, in vain, that it was clearly useless to send any more for the same purpose. If the obstinacy of the husbandmen was still to be overcome, it must be, not by the mission and ministry of another of his servants, but by the instrumentality of some one, who, though he might go to the husbandmen upon the same errand as the servants before him, should come in the possession of superior personal influence, and greater personal authority, from a nearer relation to the owner than any servant had yet sustained. Nor was any one, personally distinct from the owner of the vineyard, yet capable of coming in his behalf, combining the authority of a master with the office of a servant, to be found except in his son. And hence St. Mark, speaking of the motives which actuated the father to send his son, *after* the mission of the last of the servants, but still *before* the mission of the son, expresses himself accordingly : “ Having, “ therefore, still one son, his own beloved *one*, he “ sent him also unto them, last.”

The son, then, whatsoever might be the superior dignity of his personal relation to the master of the household, yet so far as concerns his vicarious relation to the owner of the vineyard, in coming to enforce his rights, would come for the same purpose as one of his servants, and support the same character as one of them. There was no difference between his relation to the owner and theirs, except in the order of the mission on the one hand—that the son came to the husbandmen in such and such a capacity last, the servants had come to them in the same first; and in the personal dignity of the messenger on the other—that the former messengers had come in the capacity of the servants of the lord of the vineyard, this last one comes not only in the capacity of his servant, but in the character of his son, and of the heir of his vineyard also; the latter elevating him as highly above the level of his fellow-messengers, as the former appeared to place him on a par with them. And as the husbandmen could not but acknowledge the truth of the character of servants, in the former messengers of the owner, even while refusing to listen to their message; so are they as little disposed to deny the reality of that relation of son, in which this last of his messengers appears, even when meditating and compassing his death. They recognise him as the heir of the vineyard, the moment they see him; and they take advantage of the opportunity afforded by his appearing in that capacity, to make away with him immediately, that his inheritance might become their own—that the only future owner of the vineyard, who was entitled to it by right of descent, being thus removed, in the absence of any other claimant,

it might remain undisturbed in their hands, who had already usurped the possession of it.

The mission of one servant, if that had failed of the desired effect, might be followed by the mission of more; but the mission of the son, as he was an only son, on the same supposition, could be followed by the mission of no other. The death of one servant, too, should the violence of the husbandmen proceed to that extremity, might not be irreparable in its consequences, if there was still a possibility, by the mission of another, of bringing them to a sense of their misconduct, and of inducing them, by repentance and submission, to offer reparation to the lord of the vineyard, not only for their original offence in resisting the assertion of his rights, but for the injury done to his messenger; but the death of his son, were that also to be added to the number of their offences, would be an excess of provocation that must leave them without hope of forgiveness, and the lord of the vineyard without the power of redress from any submission which they could offer, or any satisfaction which they could make, for so grievous an outrage.

Like the catastrophe of a tragedy, then, the course of whose events has been gradually passing from one stage of wickedness to another—the death of the son, however naturally to be expected under the circumstances of the case, was the acme of a series of the same kind of crimes, the worst and most atrocious of all—the climax of repeated aggressions, committed by the husbandmen against their proper lord and master, compared with which every former

injury done to his rights might appear slight and venial. After this most decisive proof of their obstinacy and impenitence, and this most cruel of all the injuries which they had inflicted upon him, it was impossible, if their master retained any power and authority over them, but that the punishment which had been deserved by their former offences, and only suspended, in the hope of repentance and amendment on their part, by means of forbearance and patience on his, must fall with redoubled vengeance on their heads.

The mere deprivation of the vineyard, and the mere loss of their personal relation of the tenants of the owner, which they had hitherto sustained; could be no adequate punishment for a cumulative amount of guilt, like this. These consequences, penal as they might be, would justly have ensued upon the first instance of the breach of their covenanted duty, as tenants, and upon their first denial of his covenanted rights, as the landlord; though their misconduct had gone no further than the simple forgetfulness of this duty, and the mere refusal to acknowledge these rights. But for the extraordinary offences of which they had been guilty, so much beyond this—for not only withholding from their master the payment of his dues in their season—but denying his authority over them—turning a deaf ear to his entreaties—despising his remonstrances—wearying his patience—insulting, abusing, and slaying his servants—entrapping, circumventing, and murdering his son, in the hope of forcibly securing to themselves the possession of his property; infinitely more would be due to the injured party, in the way of redress, and therefore

infinitely more must be exacted from the injurers, in the way of punishment. Hence, when the narrator of the parable was arrived at that part of his story, which shewed both the wickedness of the husbandmen, and the measure of the wrongs of the lord of the vineyard, to have reached their height, and to be incapable of further aggravation ; whether the question which precedes, had been put, or not, “ When the lord of the vineyard is come, what “ will he do unto those husbandmen ? ” the instinctive sense of the reparation owing to the sufferers from outrageous injustice, and of the punishment due to the perpetrators of enormous wickedness, must have suggested the answer ascribed to the hearers, “ Wicked *as they are*, he will destroy them according to their wickedness, and the vineyard he will “ let out to other husbandmen, who will render him “ the fruits in their seasons ; ” in which two things are specified, as parts of the same punishment, very different from each other, yet equally deserved, under the circumstances of the case, by the persons in fault ; their own utter destruction first—and the transfer of the vineyard, before possessed by them, to others, next.

But the crimes and offences against the owner of the vineyard, which rendered the husbandmen obnoxious to all this punishment, had been committed in his absence : the infliction of the punishment upon the proper subjects, would require his presence at home : and the coming of the owner, indispensable as it must be deemed to the production of this effect, is spoken of as still future. He is not seen to return in the parable, much less to inflict the punishment which he could return only to execute on

those who so justly deserved it. The action of the parable, therefore, is suspended at this point of time; whence it may be inferred that some interval must transpire, before the vengeance due for every offence of the husbandmen, and especially for the last and worst of all, the death of the son of their lord, could actually overtake them, however certain to do so in the end; or if the course of the event is still pursued up to this final consummation, it is by a change in the manner of the narration, from the language of history to that of prophecy, which of itself would suffice to intimate that in the application of the facts of the parabolic to those of any real history, every thing *after* this point of time must be referred to the future, whether every thing before, or up to it, is to be referred to the past, or not. On this point, however, more will be said hereafter.

THE MORAL.

The historical moral of the parable, or the conclusion resulting from the joint import and tendency of its material circumstances, is almost too obvious to require to be pointed out; nothing being plainer, than that the final effect of the preceding representation is to shew, by what means the enjoyment of a valuable privilege—the privilege of standing in the relation of tenants to a certain landlord, in the possession of a certain vineyard—was acquired by the proper persons, in the first instance; and by what means it was lost to them again. The proper persons were husbandmen, such as the cultivation of a vineyard would necessarily require; and they acquired the enjoyment of their privilege by the act of the owner of the vineyard, who made choice of

them to possess and to cultivate it in his stead—subject to the usual condition of respecting his own rights as the landlord of the soil; and they lost it again through their own fault, by failing to observe this condition, and refusing to respect these rights.

Such is the outline of the parable, and such the connection of its several circumstances in general, as all taking their rise from this one first principle, the planting and forming of a vineyard, for the same end and effect for which all vineyards are formed and planted—the personal benefit and advantage of the owner of the vineyard, from that species of property in the ground, whether cultivated by himself, or let out to tenants in his stead. The possession of the vineyard under such circumstances, could be first acquired by the occupants for the time being, only upon certain conditions; and it could continue to be retained by them, ever after, only upon the same. It would be just as absurd to suppose they could be retained in possession of the vineyard, without observing the necessary conditions, as that they could have been put into possession of it, without being subjected to them. The first part of the parabolic œconomy, therefore; is naturally directed to shew, by what means, and upon what terms, the tenants of the owner were placed in possession of their trust; the next, by what means, and in consequence of what failure in the observance of their own engagement, they were necessarily to be dispossessed of it again. Every thing else, which forms a part of the transaction, as it does not directly bear upon one or other of these two results, may be considered so far parenthetical or accidental; though even these parts may conspire to a proper end, and serve to a proper

use of their own; more especially the intermediate œconomy, between the departure of the owner abroad, after placing the husbandmen in possession of the vineyard, and his return again to be followed by their dispossession of it—which is, in fact, the principal part of the narrative—and beginning with the mission of the first of the servants to enforce the proper claims of the owner, by describing the aggravated misconduct of the tenants, in their treatment of the servants, over and above the simple rejection of the claims of the master, prepares the way for the aggravated punishment, over and above the simple alienation of the possession of the vineyard, which was therefore to be inflicted upon them.

Without stopping then to recapitulate any further the circumstances of the parable, in order to the elucidation of this simple historical moral, we may pass at once to more general considerations, which will serve as a preliminary to its interpretation.

There is so striking a resemblance between the terms and images of the present parable to a certain extent, and those of the allegory, contained in the fifth chapter of Isaiah—that the idea of the gospel parable might almost have been taken from the description on record in Isaiah. To enumerate every point of this resemblance, implied or express, would carry us too far into details. It is a vineyard, which is the subject of the description in both. In both, the vineyard has an owner, distinct from the vineyard itself, or from those to whom the vineyard is committed in trust. In both, the formation and preparation of the vineyard are first described, be-

fore anything else is supposed to happen to it, or to be done with it; and in both, the terms of the description, the particulars of the formation, are almost identical, leading to a common inference, that no care or pains were spared by its owner to render it perfect—nothing was neglected that depended upon himself, which might be desirable for it as an ornament, or necessary to it as a convenience. And not to pursue the parallel through the rest of the particulars in each instance, we may remark upon it as a truly critical coincidence between them, that the son of the owner of the vineyard takes a prominent part in the parable, and comes to the husbandmen in quality of the well-beloved of the owner, and the heir of the vineyard; and the description in Isaiah is delivered in the person of some speaker, addressing his well-beloved, and ascribing the property of the vineyard, which is the subject of the allegory, to this well-beloved; whom his name and relation alone would imply to be his son.

We had occasion to refer to this allegorical description of Isaiah's before, and to shew that he subjoins the moral of it as follows; "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant:" whence it was easy to infer, that if the vine or pleasant plant denoted the Jews, the vineyard, the receptacle of that vine, must stand for the land of Judæa, the local habitation of the Jews—in opposition to any other country. But the people of the Jews, under the circumstances of the case, were the people of God; the local habitation of the Jews was the local habitation of the visible church of God. The conclusion then to which we might come, from a com-

parison of the present parable with the allegory of Isaiah, so far as regarded the meaning of their common material image, would be this ; that the vineyard, agreeing in so many respects in both, is the same in both, and may stand indifferently for the land of Canaan, as the local habitation of the people of the Jews, in their proper relation to God, or for the visible church of God, as planted among and consisting of the Jews ; between which church, considered independently of the members belonging to, and comprised by its communion, and the country in which they live—the visible boundaries of their local habitation—it is not possible to draw a distinction.

By what association of ideas, and by what attention to strict propriety of speech even in the metaphorical use of terms, the church of God, as planted in Judæa, and still limited to the precincts of that country, might come to be denoted by such an image as this—was shewn at large in treating of the parable of the labourers ; where also, as well as here, the principal or fundamental image was the idea of a vineyard, and of something connected with it, or transacted in it. The garden of the Lord, the vineyard of the Lord—these are forms of expression, which as used of him in whom the lordship of all the earth was vested, both in their original conception, and in their determinate application, could properly be meant or understood of nothing, but some part of the world, selected from the whole, and placed in a peculiar relation to the common lord and owner of all ; some small and individual, but chosen and favoured polity among the families of mankind, of each of whom God was alike the head :

distinctions, which at this time were true of no country, in opposition to the rest of the world, but Judæa; nor of any people, in opposition to the rest of mankind, but the Jews.

In fact, that one part of the present allegory which relates to the history of the son of the owner of the vineyard, is such as of itself to furnish a clue to the interpretation of the whole. His personal relation as the Son; his personal description as the well-beloved of his Father; his mission to the husbandmen as his father's messenger; his treatment at their hands in particular; the penal consequences thence resulting, or liable to result, to its authors, more than from any former instance of their misconduct besides—are such as *prima facie*, with the evidence of the event to direct us to their meaning, are seen to be capable of agreeing to nothing, and finding their fulfilment in nothing, but the facts of our Saviour's personal history. If so, the Lord of the vineyard to whom he stands in the relation of Son, is the first person in the blessed Trinity; and the God of Israel. The vineyard to which this lord stands in the relation of owner, is the church of God as planted in the land of Israel, and as still confined to those precincts. The husbandmen, to whom that vineyard was committed, and who became, by virtue of that act, the recognised tenants of the owner in the possession of his vineyard—must be the people of the Jews, as placed in possession of the visible church, established in their own country. The other personages who stand to the lord of the vineyard in the relation of the servants of his household, and to the husbandmen in the relation of his messengers, fulfilling a

certain commission with respect both to them and to him—whose mission precedes, but in its final end and purpose agrees with that of the son—will be the prophets or holy men of God, who lived from time to time among the Jews, before the Gospel dispensation, and discharged a definite part with respect both to them, and to the God of Israel, who sent them. The alienation of the vineyard from the husbandmen, at first put in possession of it, in consequence of their own misconduct, and as part of the punishment on that account to be inflicted on them, is the alienation from the Jews, of the privilege of standing in the relation of the peculiar people of God; and the transfer of the vineyard to other husbandmen, is the transfer of the possession of the visible church from the Jews to the Gentiles. The moral of the parable, so far as it was designed to convey this particular assurance, is asserted by our Lord himself: “For this reason I say unto you, “The kingdom of God shall be taken away from “you, and given to a nation producing the fruits “thereof.” The taking away of the kingdom of God here, is an equivalent expression for taking away the possession of the vineyard, in the parable—as the allusion to its fruits sufficiently intimates—and the persons from whom it was to be taken away, that is, the persons whom our Lord was addressing at the time, being clearly the Jews, they, to whom it was to be given, on the principle of contraries, must be the Gentiles. It is very observable, however, that it is not the vineyard which it is said should be taken away from the one, to be given to the other—but the kingdom of God. The vineyard as such must be understood of the visible church, as

established among the Jews, and as confined to their country: the kingdom of God may be understood of the same church whether as established among them, or among the Gentiles—whether as still confined to one community, or as extended to all mankind.

The parabolic history, then, is a concealed, but real history of God's dealings with the Jews, whether past, or to come, from the time when they became his chosen people, to the time when they should cease to be so: that is, from the Exodus out of Egypt, to the communication of Gospel privileges to the Gentiles. It is consequently partly historical, and partly prophetic, but the historical part is subservient to the prophetic. It is historical from the point where it commences, down to the mission of the son—prophetic from that time forward to that period in the œconomy of the Gospel, whatsoever it was, when the spiritual privileges once actually possessed by the Jews, might properly be said to have been actually lost by them, and actually transferred to the Gentiles.

THE INTERPRETATION.

In the first place, the vineyard, as such, had no being until it was planted; nor the lord of the vineyard that peculiar character and relation by which he was known as its owner, until the same event: and in like manner, whether God had any church in the world, prior to the formation of the Jewish, or not, he had no such church as that which must be denoted by his vineyard; he had selected no country to be the local habitation of a community sacred to himself, until he made choice of Judæa.

The formation of the vineyard was the act of the master of an household, who was also the owner of a larger estate ; and the selection of Judæa to be the receptacle of the visible church was the act of the Lord of the whole earth ; the choice of one nation to be his peculiar people, and to live in possession of his church, in a country appropriated to them and to it, was made by the Father of the families of all mankind.

The final end of planting the vineyard, that is, devoting a certain portion of a larger estate to the inhabitation and culture of the vine, was necessarily the profit and advantage resulting to the possessor from that species of possessions in particular ; and therefore the personal benefit of the owner. To speak in the language of the parable, the final end for which he must be supposed to have planted it, was “ to receive of its fruits in their season.” Now the fruits of the vineyard are nothing distinct from the fruits of the trees planted within it : and where the vineyard itself is a metaphorical denomination for the local habitation of the visible church, the trees which are planted within it, taken in the complex, must stand for the aggregate of professing believers, who make up the congregation of the visible church. The vineyard denoting the country which comprehends the visible church, its vines must denote the nation which lives in that country, possessed of that church.

But when moral agents, taken individually, or communities taken collectively, are metaphorically denoted by trees ; the fruits of these trees, it has been shewn, in reference to instances of the same

kind of metaphor on other occasions ^g, must stand for the conduct of moral agents, the personal qualities and personal behaviour, which are the effect of certain moral principles ; and the fruits of vines in particular, as the kind of tree which grows and is cultivated in vineyards, must stand for such qualities and such behaviour, as the effect of such principles, in the instance of such moral agents more particularly, as the professing members who compose the congregation of the visible church.

Considered in this point of view, the final end which the owner proposed, in the formation of his vineyard, will be understood to mean a certain moral constitution in the lives and characters of the visible members and possessors of his church, proposed by its author, in its foundation. The relation of moral agents in general is not that of members of the visible church in particular ; nor, consequently, are the obligations incumbent on moral agents in general, necessarily the same with the obligations incumbent on the members of the visible church in particular. Moral agents, under all circumstances of their relation to God, have their proper duty arising from their proper relations ; and the obligation to this duty under all circumstances is founded in the same necessity of an implicit obedience to the declared will of God. But moral agents in general are left to collect this will, and consequently the particulars of their duty, from the light of conscience ; the members of the visible church are taught it by the light of revelation : and the light of conscience is one thing, and the light of revelation is another. The light of conscience, in-

^g Vide vol. ii. 100—111 : iii. 365—369.

deed, can teach or suggest nothing which the light of revelation will not confirm and approve ; but the light of revelation has ascertained many things, which the light of conscience could never discover.

It is essential, therefore, to such a relation as that which subsists between God as the head, and moral agents, as the members of the visible church, to be founded in the duty of an implicit obedience to the will of God, not only as declared by the law of conscience, but still more, as explained and certified by the light of revelation. Conformity, therefore, of the conduct to the principles of their proper obligation, in the members of the visible church, is conformity to the revealed will of God ; and the will of God, in every revelation of himself to his moral creatures, has been made known alike on points of faith and on points of practice, as equally necessary to perfection ; both as to what he requires to be believed, and what he requires to be done by his creatures, in their present state of probation, with a view to his own favour and acceptance. It may justly be said, then, that God planted his vineyard, that is, formed and established his church, (whether among the Jews at first, or among Christians since—with respect to this one object and purpose, would be indifferent,) subject to his own revealed will and discipline, that he might “purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works ;” that he might prescribe to the members of this church, and experience from them, a more entire conformity to his own will, in all essential respects, and a more perfect obedience, than he could require or receive from the rest of his moral creatures. The moral obedience of the creature, indeed, under all circumstances, has a natural

tendency to promote the glory of the Creator ; but the obedience of moral agents in general reflects honour upon God as the moral Governor of all mankind, that of the members of his church redounds to his glory as the Head and Governor of the Church. And as the latter of these relations is closer than the former, so is the obedience founded upon the latter more perfect than that which is entailed by the former ; and therefore the resulting effect to the glory of the Creator is more complete in the one case, than in the other.

The care of the owner, to render his vineyard perfect, and to provide it with every thing necessary to the attainment of the end which he proposed in planting it, before he let it out—was singularly displayed in the minute preliminary description of its component parts. To this part of the parabolic history, much might be specified as answering, in the real history of the Jews ; first, with regard to the effect resulting from all these precautions, in the entire adaptation of the vineyard to its natural uses and purposes—the peculiar locality of Judæa, the physical constitution of the country, its isolated situation in comparison of other countries, all eminently qualifying it to become the vineyard of God, for the time being, on earth, and the receptacle of a nation, living within it, subject to a law and a discipline peculiarly their own, and detached by their position, as much as by their religion, from the rest of mankind ; secondly, as preliminary to that result, and as answering to the several steps in a series of provisions, designed for one and the same effect—the extraordinary dealings of God, preparatory to the

settlement of the Jews in the land of Canaan, which remarkable as they were, had no object in view from the first, but to lead to that result ; and display the same prospective solicitude to provide a fit people in due time for the possession of his church, as a proper country beforehand for the habitation of this people. In the whole of this preparatory œconomy, there is nothing which is not of an extraordinary character. The call of Abraham, the history of that patriarch subsequently, the lives of his immediate descendants, down to the period of their settlement in Egypt, are a series of special favours and distinctions, conferred on a single family ; the exercise of a never-failing particular providence in their behalf ; the control of natural and preternatural causes, alike to conspire for their good ; the instances of great temporal blessings, and still greater spiritual privileges, bestowed upon and appropriated to them. The history of the same family, through an equal length of time, from the descent into Egypt to the Exodus, is the history of the continued exertion of the same providential care, if not so openly yet not less effectually, to multiply them from an handful of souls to the number of the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea, in multitude ^h : while the facts of their history, at the time of the Exodus, and after it, abundantly prove that the same outstretched hand of their heavenly protector, which had been so signally displayed by their deliverance from Egypt, was not shortened

^h Deuteronomy xxvi. 5 : “ And thou shalt speak and say “ before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish *was* my “ father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there “ with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and “ populous.”

or relaxed, but still as visibly exerted in the wonderful instances of its providence for their support and preservation in the desert.

But that event in the history of the preparatory dealings of God with his people, whom he had already chosen to be the future possessors of his visible church—which answers most exactly to the care and pains of the owner of the vineyard, bestowed in providing it with all things necessary to its perfection, before it was committed to husbandmen—is the delivery of the Law, after the Exodus, yet prior to the settlement in Canaan. The interposition of this event, between these two periods, is alone sufficient to prove that without the delivery and reception of the Law beforehand, the Jews could not be settled in Canaan: the reason of which doubtless was, that they could not be settled in Canaan, except as the people of God, nor could they become the people of God, until they had received the Law of God. The fabric of the visible church may be said to have been reared, when the formation of that Law was complete in all its parts. The polity under which the nation were designed to live, from that time forward, was already defined; though the country within which the nation were to live, subject to that polity, remained still to be possessed. From that time forward the visible church travelled about with the Jews, in their subsequent wanderings in the wilderness, as the visible temple or residence of God migrated from place to place, with the shiftings of the moveable tabernacle; but as from the time of the building of the tabernacle, until the place of his abode was permanently established at Jerusalem, God did not cease to be resident among

his people; so from the time of the delivery of the Law, until the time of their actual settlement in Canaan, his visible church never ceased to be established among the Jews, not even while resident in the wilderness. Now it may justly be presumed of such a Law, that being the proper work of a Divine legislator, for whatever purpose it was intended, it must have been complete and perfect; and therefore, from the moment of its delivery, a just representation of the future Jewish constitution both in church and state. Considered too as the revelation of the will of God to his creatures, placed in the specific relation of the members of his church on earth; it could not but be an adequate standard both of their faith and their practice, as equally subject to the Divine will and appointment beforehand; it must have supplied as plenary a knowledge of all that the Head of the church might require of its members whether to believe or to do, as would suffice to render the comers thereunto perfect, and to leave them ignorant of nothing which they might be concerned to know for the sake of their duty, and in order to their acceptance.

The very design proposed by the owner in the conversion of a part of his estate into a vineyard, required that the vineyard, when formed, should be let out to proper persons to be cultivated in his stead; and the very selection of Judæa as the local habitation of the church upon earth, required that a particular community should be placed in possession of that country, as the congregation of that church. A visible church without a visible congregation, and a visible congregation without a visible and local

habitation upon earth, would be a nonentity. The vineyard was provided for the husbandmen before the husbandmen were found for the vineyard; and the land of Judæa had already been selected, and set apart to be the habitation of the church on earth, long before the Jews, as a nation, were ready to be settled there. The choice of the husbandmen to be the possessors and cultivators of his vineyard, rested of course with the owner; and the choice and selection of any one nation to be the possessors of his church on earth, distinctly from the rest, could be made only by God. And as the appointment of the husbandmen, under such circumstances, to the possession of his vineyard, was so far gratuitous on the part of the owner; so was the call of Abraham, in the first place, and the establishment of his posterity in their peculiar relation to God, in the next, simply the effect of the grace of God. Abraham did not choose God, but God chose Abraham; and obedience to the call of God, for ought which we know to the contrary, might be the first step to his turning to Godⁱ: and as to his posterity, notwithstanding

ⁱ Philo Judæus was plainly of opinion that Abraham before his call, was not a worshipper of the true God; De Nobilitate, Operum ii. 441. 43: τοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνους ὁ πρεσβύτατος, γένους μὲν ἦν Χαλδαίων, πατὴρ δὲ ἀστρονομικοῦ, τῶν περὶ τὰ μαθήματα διατριβόντων, οἱ τοὺς ἀστέρας θεοὺς νομίζουσι, καὶ τὸν σύμπαντα οὐρανόν τε καὶ κόσμον. Cf. *ibid.* page 11. line 47, et sqq.; De Abrahamo: and 417. line 36 sqq. De Præmiis et Pænis.

Suidas also, under the name of Ἀβραάμ, has a gloss to this effect: Ὅτι ἤρξατο ἡ εἰδωλολατρεία ἀπὸ Σερονῆ ἕως τῶν χρόνων Θάρρα τοῦ πατρὸς Ἀβραάμ, κ', τ. λ.

The present is not the time, nor place, to enter upon such a question as this, whether the father of the faithful before his call, was a worshipper of the host of heaven, as it is implied in

their designation to be the people of God, from the time of the call of their progenitor—the fulfilment

the first of these testimonies, or an idolater, according to the second. The only passage of scripture, which seems to countenance either of these opinions, is Joshua xxiv. 2: “And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, “Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, “*even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; “and they served other gods.” So likewise, verses 14 and 15. If the teraphim, spoken of as the gods of Laban, which Rachel is said to have taken away by stealth, Gen. xxxi. 19. 34, 35. (Cf. 30. 32.) or those strange gods, which had got into the family of Jacob, and were put away by his command, after his return from Padan-aram, Gen. xxxv. 2. 4: were these gods of their fathers; it is probable that they were images, and therefore that the species of false religion to which they were addicted, was not that of the worship of the stars, but idolatry. It is very observable, however, that no mention is made of Abraham as well as of Terah, in this allusion to the ancestors of the Jews who had served other gods, beyond the river, while they were still there. Nor is there any text in scripture that even by implication, and much less directly, asserts that Abraham himself was an idolater in any sense, before his call: whatever his family might be.

And with respect to the worship of other gods, as laid to the charge of the ancestors of the Jews beyond the flood, it would by no means follow that the knowledge or worship of the true God, was already lost and extinct among them, because it was not exclusive, or still uncombined with any species of idolatry or false religion. There is abundance of proof in the subsequent history of the patriarchs, that the knowledge of the true God in their time, was more or less retained among the inhabitants of Canaan, among the Philistines, and in Egypt. Laban indeed may appear to distinguish the God of the father of Jacob (that is, the God of Isaac or of Abraham) Gen. xxxi. 29: from his own god, or gods; but verse 53, in the same chapter, he speaks of the God of Abraham, as the God of Nachor, and the God of their father, that is, the God of Terah also. As the God of Nachor he would be the God of Laban also; and it is

of this dispensation in their behalf at last was so independent of their own concurrence, that if their ancestors had known little of God, before their separation from among the idolaters beyond the river, their posterity retained as faint a recollection of him, at the very time when the first step was taken for their deliverance from Egypt, and from among the idolaters in that country^k.

The commission of the vineyard to the husbandmen was preceded by the preliminary stipulation usual in such cases; according to which, the husbandmen, so long as they continued in possession of the vineyard, bound themselves to respect the rights of the owner, and the owner, so long as they continued to respect his rights, bound himself to retain them in possession of his vineyard. The existence of a covenant between God and the Jews is too notorious a fact to require any proof. It is more important to observe, with respect to this particular circumstance in the real history answering to the fictitious—that as the covenant of the owner was made with the husbandmen before they were put in possession of his vineyard; so was the covenant of God made with the Jews, before they were placed in possession of the promised land, and of the relation of the members of

quite clear, from Genesis xxiv. that in the time of Bethuel, the father of Laban, the knowledge of the Lord, as such, or of the one true God, was not confined to a single branch of the family of Terah, the line of Abraham—but was equally familiar to the other, the line of Nachor.

^k Exod. viii. 26; xii. 12; xxxii. 1. 4. 8: Levit. xvii. 7; xviii. 3: Numb. xxxiii. 4; cf. xxxii. 17: Joshua xxiv. 14: 2 Kings xii. 28: Ezekiel xx. 7, 8. 18. 24; xxiii. 3: Acts vii. 39—43: Cf. Amos v. 25, 26.

the visible church; and as the continuance of the husbandmen in that possession depended upon the observance of their original contract, so did the continuance of the Jews in the relation so acquired, on the fulfilment of the covenant by which they acquired it. That this covenant was concluded at Horeb, at the time of the delivery of the Law, Moses being the mediator between God and the people; that it was a covenant of promises on the one hand, founded on condition of performances on the other; that the substance of the covenant on both sides amounted to this, that God should be exclusively their God, and they should be exclusively his people¹; that conse-

¹ The substance of the covenant in question is summed up in such texts as these: Exodus vi. 7: "And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God." Exodus xix. 5, 6: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." The first of these declarations was made immediately after the first appearance of Moses before Pharaoh, in quality of the person commissioned to demand and effect the deliverance of the people of the Lord, from among the Egyptians: the second, immediately after the arrival at mount Sinai. The answer of the people to that overture is recorded in these words, Exodus xix. 8: "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Cf. xxiv. 3. 7, 8.

The fact of the formal conclusion of this covenant, by which God became their God, and they became his people, on such stipulated terms, with that generation of the Jews, who came out of Egypt, exclusively, is insisted on, expressly, at Deuteronomy, v. 2, 3: "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day."

And that the covenant thus solemnly concluded with the fathers, the representatives of the nation at that time, was to be considered as concluded with every generation of their posterity,

quently the Jews, by such an agreement on their part, became bound to the obedience of the whole

to the remotest period, is virtually asserted, Deuteronomy xxix. 14, 15: "Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; but with *him* that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with *him* that is not here with us this day."

Cf. generally, Exod. xxiii. 20—25; xxix. 45, 46; xxxiii. 16: Deuteronomy iv. 7. 20. 23. 31. 34; vii. 6. 9; x. 15; xiv. 2; xxvii. 9, 10; xxix. 9—13.

The promises attached to the observance of the covenant on the part of God, are found recorded, more particularly, Exod. xxiii. 25, 26: Levit. xxvi. 4—13: Deuteron. vii. 12—16; xxviii. 5—14. The performances required of them in their turn are of course a perfect obedience of the whole Law, an equal observance of all and singular the particulars contained in that revelation of the will of God.

Almost the last act of the life and ministry of Moses was the renewal of this covenant with the generation which had grown up in the wilderness; prior to their actually entering into possession of the promised inheritance, to the borders of which he himself had already conducted them. The result of that renewal of the covenant, between both the parties in it, is thus summed up at that time also: Deuteronomy xxvi. 17, 18: "Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: and the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments."

The same covenant was solemnly renewed at Shechem, in the time of Joshua, after the people had been put in possession of their inheritance, and not long before his own death: Joshua xxiv. 22—25. It was also renewed, under circumstances of corresponding solemnity, after a long period of the national forgetfulness, and national infraction of it, as the first step in the national reformation, at two much later periods; once in the first of Joash, king of Judah, under the auspices of the good high priest Jehoiada: (2 Kings xi. 17: 2 Chron. xxiii. 16:) and

declared will of God, as the federal head whom they had voluntarily chosen, and the Deity on the other hand, was pledged by his own veracity, to withhold no good thing from his chosen people, so long as they continued faithful to his will—and in particular, never to renounce or forsake them, never to deprive them of their peculiar relation to himself, or to transfer it to others in their stead; was shewn by me on a former occasion, and need not be now repeated^m.

From the time of the conclusion of this covenant with the owner of the vineyard, the husbandmen acquired a new character, that of his tenants in the possession of his vineyard; a character which must distinguish them from every class of husbandmen besides: and from the time of the conclusion of the covenant of Horeb, the Jews acquired a new character, that of the people of God, and the chosen possessors of his visible church; which must so far distinguish them, as one of the nations of the world, from the rest of mankind, and the rest of mankind from them. The existence of a preliminary stipulation with their landlord, left it no longer to the option of the tenants, whether they should respect his rights or not; and the engagement to which again, in the eighteenth of Josiah, (2 Kings xxiii. 3: 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. Cf. Jeremiah xi. 1—10.) It appears too from 2 Chron. xv. 12. that it was renewed in the days of Asa; and Nehemiah ix. 1—33; x. 1—28, 29. it was renewed with great solemnity in his time; and that renewal is almost the last thing in the public history of the Jews, so far as it is recorded in scripture. The canon of scripture may therefore almost be said to close with the placing on record the fact of the renewal so made.

^m Vide vol. iv. 378—381.

the Jews had voluntarily bound themselves, by their part in the covenant of Horeb, left them no longer free to obey or disobey the Law of God as they thought proper—but made it incumbent upon them to render the obedience to which they stood pledged, or to incur the penalty of disobedience—to which they stood obnoxious.

The possession of the vineyard by the husbandmen, even on such terms, was a valuable privilege; and in proportion as the privilege was valuable, its deprivation would amount to a punishment. The privilege of standing to God in the relation of his chosen people, was justly the boast and glory of the Jews. No circumstance of distinction, in which one nation may possibly excel another, can be mentioned in their behalf, but this; and this is a distinction singular of its kind, and capable of compensating for every other defect. When Moses would specify in what the Jews were really superior to the rest of mankind, he instances in nothing but this; and when St. Paul would answer the question, what advantage then hath the Jew? it is by the mention of a circumstance of distinction derived exclusively from such a relation—that unto them were committed “the oracles of God^b”; that theirs was the adoption, the covenant, and the promises^c. Other nations might surpass them in numbers, in wealth, in antiquity; in extent of country; in conquest and empire; in military glory; in the arts and refinements of social life. No people were the people of God but they; and in that capacity, in religious knowledge and in moral eminence, in true intellectual dignity and

^b Rom. iii. 2.

^c Rom. ix. 4.

practical holiness, they were far superior to the rest, of mankind.

Among the advantages resulting to the husbandmen from the possession of their trust, subject to the conditions on which they held it—it would scarcely be necessary to mention that the maintenance of those, who had the care of the vineyard, from the fruits of it, the production in part of their own labour, must of course have been one; but that the temporal blessings, promised to the Jews as the reward of the faithful observance of their proper covenant, are among the most express and prominent of the sanctions by which it is known to have been enforced ^P.

The husbandmen, first placed in possession of the vineyard, by virtue of their original covenant, are supposed to be retained in possession of it to the end, by virtue of the same; a representation, which, the husbandmen standing collectively for the nation of the Jews, may be admitted to be only just and proper, notwithstanding the length of time embraced by the parable from first to last. The individuals who compose a nation, necessarily differ at different times—but the nation itself continues the same; and what is done with the nation, or must be ascribed to the nation, at one time, may be said to have been done with it, and must still be ascribed to it, ever after. It is a principle of human law, that a corporate body never dies, though the individuals who compose it, are perpetually changing; and that its acts at one time are its acts at another. Thus it is,

^P Vide Exod. xxiii. 25, 26; Lev. xxvi. 4—13; Deuteron. vii. 12—16; xxviii. 5—14.

that the treaties which nations conclude with each other, hold good for ever; so long as the reasons or causes which gave occasion to them, remain unaltered. The rights of the master of a family are transmitted to his heirs; the obligations which the ancestors contracted, are binding upon their posterity. If God, then, made a covenant with the Jews, as a people, on their coming forth from Egypt, he made it with every succession of their descendants, unto the advent of Christ; if the nation of the Jews contracted such and such obligations, with respect to God, at that beginning of their existence as a nation, the same obligations became binding on their descendants, the Jews of all future generations, so long as they continued in being^q.

The departure of the owner left the husbandmen to themselves, and so far as concerned the fulfilment of their covenant, to their own sense of honour, and the regard due to their own good faith. It is essential to a state of probation, that while it lasts, the subjects of it should be left to themselves; and though they have a definite part to perform, and a proper duty to fulfil, and are sensible of it accordingly; yet whether they will discharge that part, and perform that duty, must be left to their own free choice, and to the usual motives which influence moral agents to right or wrong actions accordingly. The visible church of God, whether among the Jews first, or among Christians since, has never been placed in any other state but this. Nor was this state of probation, as concerned the husbandmen,

^q Vide Deuteron. xxix. 14, 15, and the note supra, page 56.

limited to the first period of their trial, on being placed in possession of the vineyard ; but from the time of the departure of the owner, when it properly began, it continued, strictly speaking, to the time of the mission of his son, with the result of which it may properly be said to have ceased. The history of the Jewish church, from the time of its settlement in Canaan, to the period of its transition into the Christian, is the counterpart of this, more especially in the fact of a series of efforts, analogous to those which were made to bring the husbandmen to a sense of their duty—the object of all which was to preserve it what it was—the original church of God—and to prevent the alienation of their peculiar privilege from the Jews to any other community.

But besides this general œconomy of probation, which runs through the whole of the history of the husbandmen, there was a determinate interval of time, between the conclusion of the contract by which they were put in the possession of the vineyard, and the first demand of the owner to receive his dues ; an interval devoted to the raising and maturing of the fruits of the vineyard—before which the claims of the owner could not be reasonably preferred, nor after it, lawfully resisted. The circumstances in which the husbandmen were placed for this length of time, were different from those in which they were placed afterwards. If they were placed, for both periods alike, in a state of probation, yet for the former it was in a state of probation that might be considered ordinary and in course ; for the latter, in a state which must be considered extraordinary and accidental. They must always have

been left to themselves for the first of the intervals in question ; but not necessarily for the second.

The fact, in the œconomy of God's dealings with the Jewish church, which answers to this, is as remarkable as any thing else. When the time was arrived for the settlement of the people in their promised inheritance, that event being over—the perusal of the history of the Jews, as contained in the book of Judges, compared with the same history for the rest of the period of their national existence, as contained in the remaining historical books of the Old Testament—clearly proves that their condition for the first and the last of these periods respectively, was not the same. They were brought out of Egypt, by an illustrious prophet^r, and conducted in their wanderings through the desert by an illustrious prophet ; who acted in all things as the mediator between God and them. They were settled in the possession of Canaan, by an illustrious prophet ; on whom the spirit of Moses had rested, and who filled the same place of mediator between God and the people, as he had done. But from the time of the death of Joshua, not many years subsequent to the conquest of the country, there is no appearance in Jewish history for some centuries afterwards, of the existence of a single person, who bore the same relation to God and the people, as had been sustained by Moses and by him. The first of the prophets, posterior to the settlement in Canaan, as we learn from the testimony of the sacred narrative itself, and from the assurance of St. Peter and St. Paul^s, was Samuel.

^r Moses is called a prophet, Hosea xii. 13.

^s Acts iii. 24 ; xiii. 20. Cf. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 18.

From the time of Joshua, then, to the time of Samuel, there was no prophet among the Jews. From the time of Samuel to the time of Malachi, there was no time without one. The former of these periods was of determinate length; being filled up by the lengths of the administrations of the judges, and being further remarkable for this coincidence, that the institution of the order of the prophets was synchronous, or nearly so, with the change of the civil constitution, from a government subject to judges, raised up from time to time, to that of hereditary kings. In fact there is reason to believe, that the interval between the Exodus from Egypt and the institution of the order of the prophets, was as nearly as possible the same as between the promise made to Abraham, and the delivery of the Law; viz. 430 years[†].

[†] It may well, I think, be admitted, that the prophecy of Moses, Deuteronomy xviii. 15: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me;" is first and properly to be understood of the institution of the order of prophets in the abstract; without prejudicing the possibility of its referring to some particular prophet—in which sense, the Jews before the coming of the Christ understood it indefinitely, (see John i. 21. 25; vi. 14; vii. 40.) and in which sense, St. Peter, Acts iii. 22, 23: and St. Stephen, Acts vii. 37. like the Christian church in general, understood it to be meant, *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, of our Saviour. The prophetic order was typical of our Saviour in his prophetic capacity—as the Levitical priesthood was typical of him in his sacerdotal; and a prophecy in its primary intention referring to that order, might be meant of him in its secondary.

The context of the same passage, from 17—21. seems to confirm this construction: and the words, which are added to the conclusion of the book of Deuteronomy, by whomsoever and whensoever written, may be thought to have an express refer-

Now the condition of the Jews, in their peculiar relation of the people of God, during the period for

ence to the passage, in that sense, and to imply, that between the time of the death of Moses, and the age of the writer, which was doubtless sometime in the interval before the birth of Samuel, the promise contained in it, of raising up such a prophet as Moses, had not yet been fulfilled: "And there arose "not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord "knew face to face;" for the promise was to this effect—that a prophet *like* unto Moses, would the LORD God raise up to them, from among their brethren.

It is impossible not to conclude from such a declaration as the following—premised to the first instance of the revelation made by God of himself to Samuel, in his quality of prophet, or the organ of communication between God and the rest of the people, "And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there* "was no open vision;" 1 Sam. iii. 1: that such a phenomenon as a prophet, whom the Lord knew face to face, which means the same thing as the *open vision*, was still unprecedented. And when it is added shortly after, 20, 21: "And all Israel from "Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to "be a prophet of the Lord. And the LORD appeared again in "Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh "by the word of the LORD:" it must be equally evident that from that time forward, the phenomenon in question was no longer unprecedented; a standing communication between God and the people was opened, in the person of a proper mediator—and was known to be so; and the prophecy of Moses, that the Lord would raise up unto them a prophet, of their brethren, like unto himself, whom God would know face to face, or in open vision, was no longer unfulfilled.

The birth of Samuel is probably to be placed B. C. 1144: and his death B. C. 1056: at the age of eighty-eight; as I endeavoured to shew in my former work, Appendix iii. vol. iii. p. 279—283. The first revelation of God to him, which was so far his ordination openly to the prophetic office, as we have it recorded, 1 Sam. iii. might be made when he was fourteen years old—the age of puberty among the Jews; B. C. 1130. If that was the case, it was just 430 years after B. C. 1560, the

which they were still destitute of such an order of persons, must have been materially different from their situation in the same respect, after they came to possess it. To what then were they left for the interval in question, whether longer or shorter, between the death of Moses or Joshua, and the appearance of the first of the prophets? To what could they be left, but their Law, such as they had received it from Moses, and such as they had bound themselves, by their own agreement, to observe it? For this period their only teacher could be Moses; their only rule of conduct, or standard of belief, could be the precepts or doctrines of the Law. There is no proof that ought was added to, or ought was detracted from the original covenant—that

true date of the Exodus, (as I apprehend,) and of the delivery of the Law; and just the same distance of time from that event, as the call of Abraham into Canaan, (B. C. 1990.) was before the Exodus, (B. C. 1560.) See my former work, vol. i. Dissertation x. and the Appendix.

The case of Deborah, who is described as a prophetess, Judges iv. 4. just before the deliverance of the Israelites from their servitude to Jabin, king of Canaan, B. C. 1336. and the mention of the mission of a prophet to the children of Israel, Judges vi. 8. just before their deliverance from the servitude to the Midianites, B. C. 1290, are no grounds of exception to the truth of the position in general, that the whole interval between the death of Joshua and the birth of Samuel, was destitute of such an order of persons as the prophets. Deborah is called a prophetess either as being in some sense a teacher of the people, for the time, as well as their judge—or in special reference to one particular gift; that of her inspired songs, of which we have an instance in Judges v. As to the other case, it was purely extraordinary, and a special interposition for a special purpose. The same may be said of a case parallel to it, the mission of a man of God to Eli, sometime before B. C. 1130, to denounce against him the prophecy recorded 1 Sam. ii. 27—36.

ought was mitigated, or ought was changed, in the terms of the existing contract between God and his people, for the interval in question. In the absence of any such change, the Law remained in its original force, and was binding to the extent of its original requisitions. An experimental process was going on, silently it may be, but still effectually for the end in view—to ascertain how far the Jew either could or would comply with these terms of his original engagement; and the result of the experiment was already known, before the first prophet, that is, the first of a new order of messengers from God, appeared among them, in the discharge of his proper commission. This definite interval, interposed to allow for the natural operation of the Mosaic covenant, and for the proof of its effects on the lives and conduct of the people of God—expressed in the language of the parable—is the period transacted after the departure of the owner of the vineyard, preparatory to the maturity of its fruits; and necessarily required to elapse, before his first demand to his own share of its productions could be made.

The mission of the servants in the parable then, is the mission of the prophets under the old dispensation; and the particulars of the agreement between the fictitious history relating to the former, and the real, in reference to the latter, may be pointed out in a variety of respects.

As first, the mission of the servants was the introduction of a new order of persons—in the œconomy of the transaction relating to the vineyard; and the institution of the order of the prophets is an equally observable era in the œconomy of the Jew-

ish church. The circumstances of the birth of Samuel were of an extraordinary kind, and calculated to raise the presumption that he was already destined in the purposes of the Divine providence, to fulfil an extraordinary part. His consecration to the service of God, from the time of his birth, and his bringing up in the temple, in perpetual attendance on the sanctuary, the offices of religion, and the ministering priest, were well adapted to strengthen that presumption. "The word of the Lord was "precious in those days;" and whatsoever communications might be vouchsafed in particular instances, and to serve especial purposes, "there was no open "vision;" there was no constant or standing communication with God, nor any definite and well-understood channel, through which it must be carried on. The first revelation of God to the future prophet was made at an early age, and under circumstances of peculiar solemnity; and not more interesting to the house of Eli in particular, than to the nation at large. That first revelation was followed by more; and none of his words was permitted to fall to the ground; that is, the inspiration and authority of the prophet were confirmed by infallible proofs, and all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba, had speedily reason to know that Samuel was *established* to be a prophet of the Lord.

Again, from the time of the mission of the first of the servants, the rest of the history of the vineyard is more properly an account of the order, and ministry, and treatment of the servants, as sent to the husbandmen on a certain errand, than of any thing else; and from the time of the first institution of the prophetic office, the best description which can

be given of the nature and particulars of subsequent Jewish history, so far as it is recorded in the books of scripture, and so far as it enters into details, is that of the account of the mission, the ministry, the succession and reception of the prophets, rather than of any thing else.

The personal designation of these messengers is that of the servants, the subordinate members of the household of the owner of the vineyard. Their relation to the Lord of the vineyard was consequently closer than that of the husbandmen, who were but his tenants. The whole community of the Jews was doubtless in one sense the household or family of God, especially in comparison of any other of the nations of mankind. But among the tribes of Israel, there was one, the tribe of Levi, which God himself had chosen to stand in a peculiar relation to himself; and by thus bringing it near to him above the rest, had invested with greater comparative sanctity than any of the rest. By virtue of this separation, then, though the whole congregation might be holy in general, the tribe of Levi was holy in particular; and though all might be the family or household of God, the tribe of Levi were his servants in a sense beyond the rest. Now though it may not be capable of proof that the prophets belonged universally to the tribe of Levi, it is certain that in some instances they did soⁿ; and at least, as the designation of the tribe of Levi to the ministry of the tabernacle, rendered them holy above their brethren, and the servants of God, in a sense different from their brethren; so the designation of the prophets to their peculiar office, rendered them holy as individuals, and the servants of God, as individuals, in a sense in which none of

ⁿ Jeremiah for instance was a priest; Jeremiah i. 1.

their brethren could be said to be so. Nor indeed are they ever described in scripture, by any name or relation but that. The word of the Lord as spoken by them, is uniformly said to have been spoken by “the mouth of his servants the prophets.”

The first of the servants was not sent until the time of the fruits was come, in the history of the vineyard; and the first prophet did not appear among the Jews, until that period in the history of the visible church, when the Jews had long been settled in Canaan, long been in possession of the church, and long tried by subjection to their proper Law, and should long since have brought forth the fruits thereof, to the honour and praise of God. The mission of the servants once begun, it is continued ever after in a series of repeated overtures from the lord of the vineyard to his husbandmen, made by as many different messengers, down to a certain time, the point of the expiration of which, is at least considerably later than the point of its beginning. There is a similar series of succession in the order and ministry of the prophets, for a corresponding length of time in the history of the Jewish church. From the time of the appointment of Samuel to that office, to the close of the canon of scripture, (an interval probably of seven or eight hundred years' duration,) it is not possible to specify a period, when no such person, and bearing no such relation both to God and to the people, as the first of the prophets had sustained, and consequently not strictly his successor in the office which he had discharged, cannot be historically shewn to have existed^t.

^t It is a very easy thing, from the time of the ordination of Samuel to the prophetic office, B. C. 1130, to the return from captivity, B. C. 536, to make out historically an uninterrupted

The servants came to the husbandmen, in the name, and sustaining vicariously the character of the

series of succession in the order of the prophets. Samuel himself, in all probability, was still living, up to the two last years of the reign of Saul. And in the very last year of Saul, just before his death, 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, we meet with an allusion to prophets, as among the stated means of communication with the Deity, under ordinary circumstances, which at that time, and under the circumstances of the case, were withheld from Saul. "And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him "not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." Cf. verse 15.

The name of Gad occurs before the death of Samuel; 1 Sam. xxii. 5. (Cf. 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. xxix. 25); and Gad was still prophesying at the time of the numbering in the reign of David, B. C. 1018: 2 Sam. xxiv. 11—14: 1 Chron. xxi. 9—13. Nathan is spoken of as a prophet early in the reign of David, 2 Sam. vii. 2; and was still prophesying at the close of his reign, 1 Kings i. (cf. 1 Chron. ix. 29; xvii. 1: 2 Chron. xxix. 25; xxix. 29); and possibly some time after the beginning of the reign of Solomon, 1 Kings iv. 5. Ahijah the Shilonite, was prophesying at the end of the reign of Solomon; 1 Kings xi. 29. (cf. 1 Chron. ix. 29), and some time after the beginning of the reign of Jeroboam; when he was an old man, 2 Kings xiv. 2—4.

The man of God, who was sent from Judah, early in the reign of Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, to denounce the future judgment of God against the altar at Bethel, is doubtless to be numbered among the regular prophets. The name of this prophet is not mentioned in Scripture (1 Kings xiii. 1); but Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* viii. viii. 5, calls him *Ἰαδών*, or Iado: though x. iv. 4, he gives him the name of Achias. At the same time, mention occurs of an old prophet, dwelling in Bethel; 1 Kings xiii. 11—18. 20—22. 26—32.

The name of Iddo occurs, sometimes under the appellation of the seer, and once under that of the prophet, both in the reign of Solomon, and the reign of Jeroboam (2 Chron. ix. 29), and the reign of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xii. 15), and in that of Abijah his son (2 Chron. xiii. 22). Shemaiah also was prophesying

lord of the vineyard: and the ordinary description of the prophets, under the old dispensation, is that

all through the reign of Rehoboam: 2 Kings xii. 22: 2 Chron. xi. 2; xii. 5. 7. 15.

In the reign of Asa, we meet with the name of Azariah, the son of Oded, the prophet, 2 Chron. xv. 1—3; and with that of Hanani, the seer, 2 Chron. xvi. 7.

In the first year of the reign of Baasha, king of Israel, we meet with the name of Jehu, the son of Hanani, as prophet; 1 Kings xvi. 1. 7—12; and he was prophesying down to the end of the reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah; 2 Chron. xix. 2; xx. 34.

The first mention of Elijah as prophet occurs, 1 Kings xvii. 1, soon after the beginning of the reign of Ahab; and he was still prophesying in the reign of Ahaziah his son; 2 Kings i. 3, &c.: and mention occurs of a writing sent in his name, to Jehoram king of Judah, even after the death of Ahijah; 2 Chron. xxi. 12—15.

The number of the prophets, in the reign of Ahab, before their destruction by Jezebel, may be inferred from the fact, that at the time of this destruction, one hundred of them were concealed by Obadiah, and screened from destruction, if not permanently, at least for a time; 1 Kings xviii. 4. 13. Nor is it probable they were less numerous at that time, than the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the grove, four hundred, under the patronage of Jezebel, when these were destroyed by Elijah; 1 Kings xviii. 19—40. Cf. xvi. 33.

In the reign of Ahab, too, we meet with the mention of two, if not three prophets, 1 Kings xx. 13—22. 28. 35. 41. The last of these is described merely as a certain man of the sons of the prophets; but it is probable, that he was the same who is described chap. xxii. 3, and 2 Chron. xviii. 7, as Micaiah the son of Imlah, and said to be labouring under the king's displeasure at the time, as one who prophesied no good for him, but evil; and so Josephus understood it, Ant. Jud. viii. xiv. 5. This last expedition against the Syrians, recorded 1 Kings xxii., was only three years later than the particulars recorded before, xx. 28—43. At this time also, mention occurs of as many as four hundred prophets, xxii. 6; but it is clear from the context, and especially from the next verse, that these were not prophets of

of messengers who came to the people, and were sent in the name of the Lord. They appeared there-

the Lord, properly so called, but false prophets of some kind or another. Jahaziel also, the son of Zechariah, a Levite, is mentioned as raised up to prophesy, in the reign of Jehoshaphat; and likewise Eliezer, the son of Dodavah; both, after the death of Ahab, and in the reign of his son Ahaziah: 2 Chron. xx. 14. 20. 37.

Elisha is first mentioned as destined to be appointed to the prophetic office, instead of Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 16. 19—22: in the reign of Ahab. He succeeded accordingly, upon the ascension of Elijah, in the beginning of the reign of Jehoram, or at the end of the reign of Ahaziah, both of them his sons; 2 Kings ii. 9—15. The ministry of Elisha extended to the reign of Joash, or Jehoash, the grandson of Jehu, king of Israel, 2 Kings xiii. 14—25, through a period of nearly sixty years, at least. Through the whole of this time repeated allusions occur to the "sons of the prophets," as 2 Kings ii. 3. 5. 7. 15, 16; iv. 1. 38; vi. 1; ix. 1—4.

Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, the high-priest, is to be reckoned with the prophets, when he was put to death, in the reign of Joash, king of Judah; 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22. Cf. verse 19.

Mention occurs of one man of God, in the reign of Amaziah, king of Judah, 2 Chron. xxv. 7: and of another, called a prophet, *ibid.* 15.

In the reign of Jeroboam the second, king of Israel, Jonah the son of Amittai, of Gath-hepher, is mentioned, as prophet, either in that reign, or before it; 1 Kings xiv. 25; and with this mention of Jonah historically, begins the series or line of the prophets in succession, sixteen in number, whose writings make part of the canon of scripture. Of this number, Amos was prophesying in the reign of Jeroboam the second, king of Israel, and of Uzziah, king of Judah; Amos i. 1; vii. 9, 10, 11: and Hosea, in the reign of Jeroboam the second, and that of Uzziah also, down to the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah; Hosea i. 1; probably down to the sixth of his reign, when Samaria was taken by Shalmanezzer, 2 Kings xviii. 10: for the kingdom of Israel was obviously yet in being, while Hosea was prophesying. Isaiah was prophesying in the reigns of Uzziah,

fore in the possession of a personal character, derived from their vicarious relation to the God of Israel.

Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Isaiah i. 1; vi. 1; vii. 1; xiv. 28; xx. 1; xxxv. 1: Cf. 2 Kings xix. 2; 2 Chron. xxvi. 22; xxxii. 20. 32: and in the reign of Manasseh his son, by whom he is said to have been put to death. Zechariah is mentioned as one who had understanding in the visions of God, 2 Chron. xxvi. 5; and coming early in the reign of Uzziah, he was probably much more ancient than Isaiah. A prophet called Oded, likewise, was contemporary with the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah, and Pekah, king of Israel, 2 Chron. xxviii. 9. Micah also was prophesying in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; Micah i. 1; see also Jeremiah xxvi. 18. Prophets of the Lord are mentioned generally, as ministering in the discharge of their proper Divine commission, under Manasseh, 2 Kings xxi. 10. Jeremiah was ordained to the prophetic office in the thirteenth year of Josiah, and continued to prophesy, down to the captivity, in the eleventh of Zedekiah; and after that in Egypt also: Jeremiah, i. 2, 3; iii. 6; xxi. 1; xxii. 11. 24. 28; xxv. 1. 3; xxvi. 1; xxvii. 20; xliii. &c.: Cf. 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; xxxvi. 21. Zephaniah also was prophesying in the days of Josiah: Zephaniah i. 1. Huldah, the wife of Shallum, is mentioned as prophetess, in the eighteenth of Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 3. 14; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22. Urijah, the son of Shemaiah, prophesied in the reign of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah xxvi. 20—23.

With regard to those other four of the minor prophets, whose writings make part of the canon of scripture, Joel, Obadiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, though the times when they were prophesying are not specified by their own testimony, it is certain that they all came before the captivity of the kingdom of Judah, and some of them probably before that of the kingdom of Israel. For the interval during the Babylonish captivity, the ministry of Ezekiel and Daniel carries on the order of prophetic succession without interruption; the former from the fifth of Jehoiachin's captivity, Ezek. i. 1, 2, down to the twenty-fifth, at least, Ezek. xl. 1: the latter, from the third of Jehoiakim, to the first of Cyrus, Daniel i. 1—21, which is in fact from B. C. 606, the beginning of the captivity, to B. C. 536, the close of it. Cf. also Daniel vi. 23; ix. 1; x. 1.

After

They were his ambassadors to his people, and like Moses and Joshua, his mediators, in all communi-

After the return from Babylon, the succession is perpetuated in Haggai, who began to prophesy in the second of Darius Hystaspis, i. 1. 15; ii. 1. 10. 19, 20, and in Zechariah, who also began to prophesy in the second of Darius, Zechariah i. 1. 7: and was prophesying at least in the fourth, afterwards; vii. 1: Cf. Ezra v. 1; vi. 14: Nehemiah viii. 2. 9; xii. 26. 36. Prophets existing and preaching at the time when the second temple began to be built, that is, directly with the return from captivity, are alluded to generally, Zech. viii. 9.

The mission of Ezra, after this, bears date from the seventh of Artaxerxes Longimanus, Ezra vii. 1. 7. 8: and Ezra must be numbered with the prophets. The book of Malachi, the last of the prophetic writings which forms a part of the canon, was by the Jewish church commonly ascribed to him. The mission of Nehemiah again bears date from the twentieth of the same reign; Nehemiah i. 1; ii. 1, and extends to the thirty-second, v. 14; xiii. 6: and Ezra and Nehemiah were contemporaries, viii. 2—9: and Nehemiah himself, as his history forms part of the sacred canon, must be numbered among the prophets. The existence of false prophets, at a given time, is a necessary argument of the still continued existence of true, at the same time; and false prophets, it appears from Nehemiah vi. 7. 14, there were still even in the time of Nehemiah; two of whom he mentions by name, Shemaiah a prophet (vi. 10) and Noadiah a prophetess, vi. 14. The book of Esther too, which closes the historical canon of scripture, must have been written by some one who possessed the authority of inspiration; and this book in my opinion belongs to the reign of Artaxerxes Ochus, and consequently brings down the succession of prophecy, or of inspiration, to within a few years of the transition of the Persian, into the Grecian empire.

Among the means provided for the perpetuity of the succession of the prophets, after their order had been established, one probably was the institution of the schools of the prophets. Upon the precise nature of these institutions, and the purposes to which they were devoted, it would be hazardous to pronounce a definite opinion; though it is most probable that they were

cations between himself and them. The authority of the prophetic office, as transferred from the

intended as schools to bring up and train in the study of the Law, and in the knowledge of their peculiar duties, the youth of the priests and the Levites, who by the appointment of the Law itself, were not only the officiating ministers in the service of the tabernacle, or temple, but the teachers and instructors of the rest of the people, and the administrators of justice too, in their behalf. But as to the time of their institution, and to what authority they are to be ascribed; there is no proof that they were in existence before the institution of the order of prophets, in the person of Samuel: but there is proof that they were already in being not long after his consecration to the prophetic office; and consequently it is most probable they were founded by him. Allusion occurs to Saul's being to meet a company of prophets, a little before his appointment to the dignity of king, under such circumstances as imply there was an establishment of them then, at Bethel in particular; or else at Gilgal; 1 Sam. x. 3, 5, 6—13. 8: (Cf. xi. 15. and xiii. 8.): and long after this, 1 Sam. xix. 18—24. there is evidence of the existence of such an institution as a school of the prophets, or a society of the prophets, at Naioth in Ramah, still in the lifetime of Samuel, though late in the reign of Saul. And from what is then said, of their being found by the messengers of Saul, sent to apprehend David, employed in prophesying, and Samuel's standing over them as appointed; verse 20—we may justly infer that they were under the superintendance and direction of the chief prophet, whosoever he was, and all their exercises, whatever they were, whether of prayer or praise to God, or of any other kind, were performed under his eye, and personal inspection.

It is not easy to trace the history of these establishments from the time of Samuel downwards, by the aid of such scanty notices as remain in respect to them. We may presume, however, that the prophets of the Lord, when spoken of collectively, and in any number at once, more especially when said to have been cut off at once, by any of the persecuting kings for the time being, (for example, 1 Kings xvii. 4. 13. 22; xix. 10. 14.) mean the members of these institutions; and that allusions to

Head of the state to those who directly represented him, was consequently supreme. The highest as

the children of the prophets, (as 2 Kings ii. 3. 5. 7. 15, 16; iv. 1. 38; vi. 1.) or the mention of particular individuals of that number (as 1 Kings xx. 35: 2 Kings ix. 1. 4:) must be understood of the children of members of such societies. There is proof of the existence of such schools, societies, or establishments, at Bethel, 2 Kings ii. 3. and Jericho, 2 Kings ii. 5. 7. in the time of Elijah; and at the same places, and probably Samaria, 2 Kings ii. 18. 23. 25: and again at Carmel, 2 Kings iv. 25: at Gilgal, 2 Kings iv. 38: at Mount Ephraim, 2 Kings v. 22: and some where by the Jordan, 2 Kings vi. 2. 4: in the time of Elisha. Perhaps, the college too, at Jerusalem, mentioned in the reign of Josiah, as the place where Huldah the prophetess was dwelling, 2 Kings xxii. 14. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22. was a similar establishment, in that city. Bethel was probably another, 1 Kings xiii. 11: and Shiloh, 1 Kings xiv. 2. at still earlier periods.

It is probable, too, that how many such prophets soever there might be, contemporary with each other, at a given time, they were all subject to some one of superior rank and dignity, as chief. Such was Elijah in his time, and Elisha after him. And if we may draw any general inference from what is recorded, 1 Kings xix. 16. of the particular provision made in that instance, for the succession of Elisha to Elijah, something like a formal appointment would be necessary to invest one prophet in particular, with this superior rank and dignity; and some ceremony analogous to that of an unction or consecration of him, by a competent authority—(his predecessor as it would seem, in the same rank and station,) must first be gone through, before he could be considered and acknowledged the head of the establishments of the prophets. That this consecration should be made by pouring oil upon him, would be no necessary consequence; for the anointing prescribed in the case of Elisha, was made by Elijah's casting his mantle upon him; 1 Kings xix. 19; the same mantle, which afterwards fell from his person, in the act of his being taken up into heaven, and remained with Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 13, 14. It is said to have been anciently one method of a person's adopting another in the East,

well as the lowest were equally subject to it; and in repeated instances its jurisdiction is seen to have been exercised over the kings, as much as over the people.

The final end of the coming of the servants even in this capacity, was to remind the husbandmen of the terms of their covenant, and to receive the dues of the lord of the vineyard, to which he was entitled by virtue of it. The mission of the prophets, regard being had to the time when they appeared, and to the manner in which they discharged their office—will appear to have had an end in view analogous to this, both with respect to God and to the people. The name of prophet in its usual acceptation, denotes a foreteller of things to come; but it is certain that even in the original language, from which the word was derived into English, it has a much more extensive meaning than this^u; and were we left to collect our idea to make him pass through his shirt; and if so, this act of Elijah's might be understood to imply that he had adopted Elisha, and therefore destined him to be his successor in the same prophetic office, which he was holding himself at the time.

For the dates of the respective reigns of the kings of Judah or Israel, referred to in the above considerations, the reader may consult my Diss. vol. iii. App. iii. iv. 230—308. and Supplem. Diss. page 546—552.

^u Προφήτης in Greek properly denotes one who speaks *for* or *in behalf of* another. In this sense it is used, Exodus vii. 1: “And the LORD said unto Moses, See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.” In this sense also, Æschylus applies it to Phœbus as the prophet of Jupiter:

Διὸς προφήτης δ' ἐστὶ Λοξίας πατρός.

Eumenides, 19.

And Virgil, by the mouth of Cæno, the harpy, says virtually the same thing,

of the office, from the part actually sustained by those who bore the name of prophets, in the discharge of their commission—we should soon have reason to perceive that to confine the design of the prophetic office to this one purpose of serving as the organ of inspiration, with respect to revelations of the future, would be to narrow its limits too much, and to overlook perhaps the most proper, and certainly the most important of its functions.

The most general, as well as exact, description which can be given of the peculiar ministry of the prophets, is that of the ministers of the Divine word, in all its communications; and more especially that of the teachers and preachers of righteousness^x. They were not raised up until the people were far gone in the corruptions of false religion, and in consequent immorality of practice; and at no period of their subsequent history, was there not urgent reason to combat these prevalent evils, and to bring back the nation to the service of the true God, and to amendment of life and manners. The terms of

Quæ Phœbo pater omnipotens, mihi Phœbus Apollo
Prædixit, vobis Furiarum ego maxima pando.

Æneid. iii. 251.

For this use of $\pi\rho\delta$ in composition, see supra, vol. ii. of this work, 527, 528.

^x Thus we read 2 Kings xvii. 13: "Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets:" which is a description of the common object of the mission and ministry of them all, in brief. Cf. 2 Chron. xxiv. 19; xxxiii. 10—18; xxxvi. 15; Jeremiah vii. 25; xxv. 4.

the original covenant between God and the people, which bound the Jews to the complete observance of their proper Law, were from time to time shamefully violated on their part; and it was the final end of the mission of the prophets—the object of their labours and ministry—to reinforce these obligations, and to bring back both kings and people to a better observance of them.

The most characteristic circumstance in their office was, consequently, one, which could ultimately be due to nothing but the necessity of making provision for repairing the breaches in the national compact between God and the people—and therefore would answer most appositely to the office discharged by the servants in the parable, and to the final end of their ministry, from the time of the denial of the dues of the owner; the circumstance of being in an eminent manner, the teachers of the efficacy of repentance, as a means of compensating for past offences, and upon condition of a more faithful obedience of the Divine Law for the future, of restoring the offenders to favour with God. The doctrine of the efficacy, and much more the necessity, of repentance for any such purpose as this, is not to be found in the Pentateuch, or only under peculiar circumstances^y. It is a doctrine, in fact, which from

^y The mention of repentance is not altogether excluded from the Pentateuch—but the peculiarity of the circumstances under which it is mentioned, consists in this—that it is not, until the whole of the penalty denounced against the Jews, in case of their nonobservance of the Law, is supposed both to have been inflicted upon them, and undergone by them—that the efficacy of repentance begins to be alluded to, as a means of restoring them once more to favour with God: vide Levit. xxvi: Deuteron. iv. 25—31; xxviii. xxx. 1—10: Cf. Nehem. i. 8, 9. Repentance,

the nature of the covenant of Horeb, (a covenant founded on the stipulation of performances, on the one side, and of rewards, as the due of such performances, on the other,) could have no place, at least no prominent place, assigned to it in the Pentateuch. To have brought forward such a doctrine there, would have been to recognise a supposition contrary to the first principles of the covenant itself; which were of course that it should be observed, according to the conditions, not broken and violated, in opposition to them; and therefore would have been to defeat its own purpose, by implying the ultimate inefficiency of such an engagement, and its consequent nullity from the first. When the covenant of Horeb was formed between God and the Jews, each of them deliberate actors in the part they respectively sustained in it, it must have been taken for granted that it would be observed as faithfully on the one side, as on the other; or it would never have been formed at all. It could be no provision of such a covenant, as at first concluded, that if the people failed to observe their part in it, all they would need to do, would be to repent, and so to make their peace with God, and be placed in the same situation as if they had never broken their covenant, nor done any thing to displease him. The time then when the evangelical doctrine of the duty and efficacy of repentance, as a means of atonement for past offences, and of restoration to favour with God for the future, in its application both nationally and individually, begins considered as the means of restoring offenders against a law of righteousness, to favour with the author of that law, without suffering the punishment denounced against transgression—is not brought forward and insisted upon in the writings of Moses, as it is in those of the prophets.

to appear in the history of God's dealings with the visible church, as planted among the Jews; is the era of a material change in the spirit of the original covenant. But this change was not made, until the Jews for 430 years and upwards, had been subject to the obligations of their original compact, unmitigated, and in all their force. The doctrine in question was first openly taught and inculcated by the prophets; and the relaxation in the spirit of the ancient Law, which brought it so much nearer to the character of the Gospel, was made by their instrumentality, in the exercise of a new commission, as mediators between God and the people^z.

The mission of servant upon servant, notwithstanding repeated disappointments, was a striking proof of the patience, gentleness, and forbearance of the owner, and of his great reluctance to deprive the husbandmen of a privilege which he himself had bestowed upon them: and the mission of an uninterrupted succession of prophets to the people of the Jews, notwithstanding the obstinacy, ingratitude, and impenitence with which the efforts of divine goodness in their behalf were requited, is among the most convincing testimonies to the boundless placability, the almost infinite long-suffering of God; to his undiminished regard for the people of his choice, notwithstanding their manifold offences and provocations against him, and to his unwillingness to deprive them of their peculiar relation to himself, if by any means they might be retained in possession of it.

The result of the mission of the servants, with regard to its effects upon the husbandmen, is the

^z Cf. 2 Kings xvii. 13. Vide also 1 Sam. xii. 20—25.

counterpart of that of the mission of the prophets, with regard to its influence on the Jews. The servants could not prevail on the tenants to acknowledge the rights of their landlord; nor the prophets succeed with the people, in turning them back to God, and to the better observance of their original covenant. The very treatment experienced by the servants, is true in repeated instances, of the personal history of the prophets, so far as it has been placed on record; and would no doubt have held good in still more, had more of their history been made known to us. The rejection of the servants begins in insult; but terminates in violence and death: and though the mission of the first in the order of the prophets, with respect to the successful attainment of its purpose in general, and for any length of time, might not be more effectual than that of the last—yet the personal treatment of these recognised messengers of God was not, all at once, of the worst description; nor so bad in the first of its instances, as in the last. The proofs of their little success, both with kings and people, as the preachers of repentance, amendment, and righteousness, begin to appear as early as the reign of Saul; but their persecution properly so called, at the hands of either, not until after the reign of Solomon ^a.

^a It is a common characteristic of the reception and treatment of the prophets, at all periods of their history, that the people refused to listen to them, and that their ministry was discharged in vain, for any such object as the bringing about a lasting national repentance and reformation of life. See 2 Kings xvii. 14, 15: 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16: Jeremiah vi. 26; xxv. 4: Nehemiah ix. 26. But the evidence of the exertion of systematic violence against them, and such violence as led to their destruction (whether by the sword, or in any other way) so far

The zeal of the servants, in the cause of their master, and the boldness which they displayed in

as we are able to collect it from the facts on record, begins with the reign of Ahab; and was the consequence of his connection with the idolatrous Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Tyre, which led to the introduction into the kingdom of Israel of the worship of Baal, in addition to the sin of Jeroboam—the two images set up for public adoration, at Bethel and at Dan. Almost the first act of the influence of Jezebel was the destruction of the prophets of the Lord, so completely, that to all appearance, Elijah was the only one left of them alive; see 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13, 22; xix. 2, 10, 14; 2 Kings ix. 7; and the protection of his life from her violence required the constant interposition of a Divine power. The only instance of an earlier date, to the same effect, would be the treatment of the prophet Jehu, son of Hanani, by Baasha; whom 1 Kings xvi. 7, seems to represent as having killed him. With respect to the kings of Judah—Hanani the father of Jehu is represented as imprisoned, even by Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 10; but the first case on record of the death of a prophet, by violence, in the exercise of his prophetic commission, is that of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, in the reign of Joash, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22. Similar instances might have occurred before; but they are not specified; not even of the reign of Joram, in which, from the character of that prince, they were most likely to have happened; see 2 Chron. xxi. 12—15. Of the later kings of Judah, Manasseh was doubtless he by whom the prophets were put to death in the greatest numbers; see 2 Kings xxi. 16; xxiv. 4: Cf. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16; Jeremiah xix. 4; Nehemiah ix. 26.

The blood of the prophets is reckoned up by our Saviour, indiscriminately with that of the apostles, among those instances of righteous blood, which should be visited cumulatively on the heads of that one generation, Luke xi. 49—51; Matt. xxiii. 34—36; and it must have been as notorious among the Jews of the time, that their fathers had slain the prophets, as that their children built their sepulchres, and disclaimed, in profession at least, all participation in that sin of their ancestors—to give occasion to the words pronounced by our Saviour, on each of these occasions, immediately before those last quoted—Luke

the execution of their commission, were shewn by the fact of the danger to which they knew them-

xi. 47, 48: Matt. xxiii. 29—32: Cf. Act. vii. 52: 1 Thess. ii. 15.

With respect to individual instances of the persecution of the prophets, besides the case of Elijah, and that of Zachariah just mentioned; Micaiah was thrown into prison, and kept there by Ahab; Urijah was fetched by Jehoiakim even from Egypt, to be put to death, and his remains were treated by him with ignominy, after his death; Jeremiah's ministry through the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah was a series of persecutions, and of grievous personal indignities, sustained by him at the hands either of princes or of people; and at last he was forcibly carried by the impenitent Jews into Egypt, and there, according to the current tradition of the Jewish church, was put to death by them.

Among the instances of suffering faith, and of persecution for righteousness' sake, enumerated in the eleventh of Hebrews, the whole of the account from verse 36 to 38, consists of such particulars as would doubtless be seen to have actually been fulfilled in the private history and personal treatment of the prophets; had it been fully related to us in every instance. And indeed to a certain extent it is actually confirmed by their history, traditional or recorded. I shall specify one proof of this, in a circumstance as remarkable as any; the allusion, verse 37, to their being sawn asunder, *ἐπίσθησαν*. It is traditionally related of Isaiah, that he was sawn asunder by Manasseh; and therefore this allusion may be referred to that fact. It is added, that he was sawn asunder with a wooden saw. Justin M. Dialog. 395. 17; *ὡς καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν θάνατον Ἡσαΐου, ὃν πρίου ξυλίνῳ ἐπίστανε*: and Hieronym. iii. 414. *ad calc.* in Isaïam lvi: Vel certe Isaïam de sua prophetare morte, quod serrandus sit a Manasse serra lignea, quæ apud eos certissima traditio est. Cf. Origen, iii. 108. B. C. in Isaïam Homilia i. 5: 465. A. Comm. in Matt. tom. x. 18, and 848. D. Comm. in Matt. Series secundum veterem Interpretem 28—Cyrill. Hierosolym. 169. 44. Catechesis xiii. cap. 3—Basil, Operum i. 828. D. in Esai. i. (Cf. Ascensio Isaïæ, iii. 10.) Chron. Paschale, 117. D.

The source of this tradition might perhaps be supposed trace-

selves to be exposed, in undertaking it—especially, after the result of the first mission—and by the treatment to which they submitted in the discharge of it; and that we may not specify individual instances of the devotedness and courage of the prophets—there is no proof of the failure of the mission of any of their number, in the attainment of its proper purpose, through the lukewarmness, indifference, or timidity of the messenger. The servants were not resisted on the plea, that they were not what they professed themselves, the deputies and representatives of the owner of the vineyard; and the prophets, even when most opposed and persecuted both by kings and by people, were still known and acknowledged to be the actual messengers of God. The mission of the servants, therefore, failed of success, because the husbandmen did not choose to comply with the demand which they were instructed to make; and the preaching of the prophets was disappointed of its natural effect, not from any doubt of the divine commission of the teacher, but from an utter dislike of his doctrine. The later missions of the servants were augmented in number, and their demands reiterated in urgency: and the prophets who lived last in the history of the Jewish church, seem to have been more numerous than their predecessors; more at least can be mentioned

able to the apocryphal production, called *Ascensio Isaie Vatis*, which Dr. Laurence translated from the Ethiopic, and published at Oxford, 1829: and to which Origen refers as containing the tradition in question, i. 19, 20. *Ep. ad Africanum*, 9, in illustration of Hebrews xi. 37. But this apocryphal production is later than the Christian era, as I hope to shew, in the Appendix to this work.

as contemporaries, and executing their ministry in common, in the decline of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, than before: and in proportion as the increasing wickedness of the times called for more strenuous exertions, and louder remonstrances on their part, the later prophets were but the more urgent in enforcing the necessity of repentance, and the more indefatigable in labouring for the national reformation. The servants were only the more harshly treated for the increased urgency of their demands; and the prophets were only the more disliked and persecuted, the more faithfully they discharged their duty, and the more assiduously they laboured for the conversion and amendment of the people. Lastly the mission of the servants was antecedent to that of the son, and even by its failure and ill success, entailing the necessity, prepared the way for the fact, of that dispensation itself; and the prophets, in like manner, were precursors of the Messiah, and the mission of the Messiah, humanly speaking, so far as it was intended for a common effect and purpose with that of the prophets, was produced by the failure of theirs.

With respect to that part of the parable, which follows next in order; it has been already observed that the personal description and personal history of the son, both before and after his mission to the husbandmen, are among the most decisive criterions of the nature, design, and import of the whole representation. It is manifest too, that to conduct to that one event, developed in the history of the son, as the final effect of his mission also—is the scope and tendency of all that precedes; the measure of

the guilt of the husbandmen, the termination of the efforts of the owner to reclaim them to a sense of their duty, the close of their period of probation, the virtual commencement of the œconomy of their retribution—the catastrophe, in short, of the whole story—are all determined by it.

Now the description of the son, before he is sent, is that of the only son, and consequently the well-beloved of his father; nor does he cease to be his only, and consequently his well-beloved son, in coming to the husbandmen: the only observable difference in the circumstances of his proper relation to the father, before and after his mission, is that before, he was the only and well-beloved son, not yet separate from the father, but living with him—after, he was his only and well-beloved, who had left him for a time, to come to his husbandmen. In like manner, our Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of his eternal generation, was always the only begotten, and always the well-beloved of the Father; nor did he cease to retain those characters when he became man^b. The only difference was, that before his incarnation, he was the only begotten and well-beloved of his Father, who was still in the bosom of the Father, and had not yet temporarily separated himself from that blessed communion, to come into the world; after his incarnation, he was the only begotten and well-beloved of the Father, who had come forth from the Father, and assumed flesh, to sojourn for a time in the world.

The mission of the Son, on such an errand, to the

^b John i. 14. 18: Matt. iii. 17: Mark i. 11: Luke iii. 22: John iii. 16. 18: Matt. xvii. 5: Mark ix. 7: Luke ix. 35: Ephes. i. 6: 1 John iv. 9.

tenants of his Father, supposed him to come as his messenger—and for the purpose of enforcing the rights of his Father from them, just as much as any of the servants before him. Notwithstanding then, the superior dignity of his personal character in comparison of theirs, his ministerial character, and his vicarious relation to the Father, were nothing different from those of the servants. It is needless to observe that our Lord was as much the Shiloh or apostle of the Father, as his disciples were so of himself, and repeatedly speaks of himself in that relation accordingly ^c. But upon this question of the resemblance of the ministerial character even of our Lord to that of the prophets under the old dispensation; we know that among the opinions current about him, during the transaction of his personal ministry, one was that one of the prophets of olden time, had risen again in his person ^d: an opinion, which, whatever else might concur to produce it, must have been principally due to the visible coincidence between the part and office which Christ was discharging at the time, and what was to be collected from scripture, or had been perpetuated by tradition, of the proper office and ministry of the prophets of the ancient dispensation.

^c Cf. Luke ii. 49; John i. 14. 18; iii. 16. 17; v. 23, 24. 30. 36—38. 43; vi. 29. 38—40. 44. 46. 57; Mark ix. 37; Luke ix. 48; John vii. 16. 18. 28, 29. 33; viii. 16. 18. 26. 29. 42; Luke x. 16; John xii. 44, 45. 49; xiii. 1. 3. 20; xiv. 24. 31; xv. 21; xvi. 5. 28; xvii. 3, 4. 8. 18. 23. 25; Gal. iv. 4; Rom. viii. 3; Hebrews i. 1; iii. 1: 1 John iv. 9, 10. 14.

^d Luke ix. 8. 19: Cf. Matt. xiv. 5; xvi. 14; xxi. 11. 46; Mark vi. 15; viii. 28; xi. 32; Luke vii. 16. 39; xiii. 33; xxiv. 19; John iv. 19; vi. 14; vii. 40; ix. 17.

The truth indeed is, as I shewed more at large in my former work^e, the object of our Lord's personal ministry was twofold; one, in which it did not differ from that of the ministry of John the Baptist, his immediate predecessor in it, nor from that of the ministry of any one of the prophets of old, more remotely his precursors also—another, in which it was peculiar to himself. The first of these offices was that of a moral teacher, and a preacher of repentance and righteousness; the second was that of the Redeemer and Saviour of mankind. The former was discharged by our Lord during the course of his ministerial life, from its beginning to its consummation; the latter was fulfilled once for all, at his death. In the first of these capacities his ministry could not be said to differ externally from that of any divinely commissioned teacher, who had gone before him whether a longer or a shorter time previously, in the same office of a teacher and preacher sent from God; in the latter, it was peculiar to himself, and absolutely without a parallel, in the ministry whether of prophets or of apostles. A prophet, an apostle, and Jesus Christ himself, in their respective order of time might agree in being teachers and preachers, and teachers and preachers sent from God: and prophets, and apostles, and Jesus Christ himself, in their respective order of time, might agree in suffering persecution, and encountering death, in the proper discharge of their ministerial commission: but neither prophet, nor apostle, nor any but Jesus Christ himself, was such a teacher and preacher, in his lifetime, who by suf-

^e Vide vol. ii. Diss. v. 147. sqq.

fering death in the proper discharge of his commission at last, effected the salvation and redemption of mankind: for no prophet, nor apostle, nor any but Jesus Christ himself, besides being a teacher sent from God, was the only begotten and well-beloved of the Father, who had left the bosom of the Father, to appear in the form of his servant—and to fulfil the work, which he had given him to perform—in the world. Nor to the death of any teacher or preacher, sent from God, even in the proper discharge of his commission, except that of the only begotten, and well-beloved of the Father himself, could such a value attach, from the infinite dignity of the sufferer, as singly to be commensurate to the salvation of the world.

The superior personal dignity of the Son seemed likely to give him an influence and an authority, even in the discharge of the same commission with one of his father's servants before him, which none of the servants merely could have possessed: and our Lord's character, even as a prophet, was superior to the character of all who went before him in the prophetic office; there being no testimony which could be rendered to the fact of a divine legation, no attestation which could be given to the power and authority by which the messenger acted in the discharge of his commission, that was not multiplied manifold more in behalf of Jesus Christ, than of any prophet who had gone before him. Yet by a strange and unnatural result, the personal coming of the son led to the commission of a worse crime by the husbandmen, and to the infliction of a deeper injury upon the owner through their means, than the mission of any one of the servants could have

done before; and by a like perversion of consequences, the result of the mission of Jesus Christ to the Jews, attested and confirmed as it was, was a catastrophe which exceeded in indignity the worse treatment of the prophets before him, and did more to prove the Jews to be rooted in impenitence, and stubbornly confirmed in their opposition to the counsels of God for their good, than the rejection and failure of any one of his overtures of pardon and peace before.

The son, in coming to the husbandmen, came as the heir to the tenants of his father's vineyard; and our Lord, in coming into the world, came to that which was his, by right of creation, and in coming to the Jews, came to his own, by virtue of their original covenant: but the husbandmen respected not the heir of the vineyard, in the son, nor the world its Creator, nor the Jews their Lord and Master, in Jesus Christ. The husbandmen knew the son to be the heir, and conspired to put him to death because he was so: and if it is not hereby implied, that the Jews must have known Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and the federal Lord and Head of their own church, yet it must be implied, that they should know him to profess himself at least, to be the Son of God; and on account of that profession, and that profession more than any thing else, should ultimately put, or seek to put, him to death. The proceedings at his examination before the sanhedrim, and afterwards at his trial before Pilate, shew that this was actually the case^f.

^f Matt. xxvi. 63—66: Mark xiv. 61—64. Harm. iv. 95: Luke xxii. 66—71. Harm. iv. 96: John xviii. 7, 8. Harm. iv. 98: Matt. xxvii. 54: Mark xv. 39. Harm. iv. 102.

Or this part of the parabolic history may be verified in the personal history of our Saviour, by the fact that the Messiah, when he appeared, was expected to appear as the Son of God^g; and Jesus of Nazareth, who appeared overtly as the Messiah, by that very circumstance must be supposed to have appeared implicitly as the Son of God: and if he was put to death openly, for this assumption of the character of the expected Messiah, so would he be implicitly for that of the character of the Son of God. Nor does the recognition of the son in the character of the heir, by the husbandmen, imply more than the mere superficial acknowledgment of his relation in that respect—or go further than what the simple matter of fact compelled them to go, in the allowance of that character; while as to any practical effect of the acknowledgment, in inducing them to act towards him accordingly—it might just as well have been disclaimed, as made. The preliminary recognition of the heir in the son, is but an ironical declaration, not a serious admission; and as contrasted with the conduct immediately adopted towards this supposed heir, in consequence of his recognition—is only the more taunting and insulting, for being made.

The mission of the son was final; and no prophet, like those of the olden time, appeared after Christ and the Baptist. The ancient dispensation closed with them; the new began with the apostles. The obstinacy of the husbandmen was more clearly evinced by the failure of the mission of the son, than by the ill success of any messenger from his father before him; and the stubborn in-

^g John i. 50.

fidelity of the Jews, was more strikingly displayed, by their reception and treatment of such a prophet as our Saviour, than of any divinely commissioned teacher, who had preceded him. The condescension both of the father and of the son, as equally concurrent in the effect of his mission—the magnanimity, zeal, and devotion to the service of his father, above every messenger of his who had preceded him, which characterised the conduct of the son, in coming upon such an errand, have been pointed out already; and are so true of the mission of Jesus Christ, so clearly illustrated by the facts of his history, and so often insisted upon in the Christian scriptures, as peculiarly characteristic of the part which he acted, that we need not stop to dwell upon them. The ultimate treatment of the son, at the hands of the husbandmen, is the counterpart of the sufferings of our Lord, at the hands of the Jews, down even to the circumstance of his being put to death without the gate. The motive of the husbandmen to this treatment, was that so the vineyard which was his, by right of future inheritance, might become theirs, by virtue of present possession. The rejection of Christianity finally by the Jews, was produced in part by a determination not to coalesce with the Gentiles, nor to see privileges exclusively their own, communicated, much less transferred to any besides them. And though the motive which must have influenced the Jews to the personal rejection of our Saviour, cannot be traced to a cause like this; yet it is still true, that their refusal to acknowledge him for the Messiah—(for such a Messiah at least, as he professed himself to be,) was necessary in their own estimation, to retain their place

and nation; they could not receive him in that capacity without, as they thought, endangering both^h. The punishment to be inflicted on the husbandmen, under the circumstances of the case, must be for *all* the offences collectively, committed by the possessors of the vineyard against its owner during all the time that they had been in possession of it; and upon the heads of that one generation who rejected and crucified Jesus Christ, the accumulated sin of bloodguiltiness, contracted through every previous period of the probation of the church, on earth, from the beginning of the world, was to be visited. The punishment in question, to be adequate to the degree of guilt contracted by its subjects, could not possibly be confined to the mere alienation of the vineyard from them, and its transfer to others; and the infidel Jews, who rejected and crucified Christ, not only had their own place and favour, and prerogatives in a spiritual sense, taken away, and transferred to the Gentiles in their stead, but by a series of judicial visitations upon them and their country, were almost totally destroyed. This deprivation, however, of the vineyard, and this destruction of the husbandmen, were both spoken of in the parable, as still to come; and the rejection of the Jews, with all its consequences to themselves, and the substitution of the Gentiles, as the people of God, in their stead, were yet future events when the parable was spoken. The personal destruction of the husbandmen, as was natural, was predicted first; and the alienation of the vineyard to others, afterwards; nor was it until the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dissolution of the ecclesiastical and civil polity of the Jews, that

^h John xi. 47—50: Harm. iv. 24.

the Jewish church, as such, ceased to have a being, and the only visible church of God that could be said to be in existence, on earth, was the Christian or Gentile, which had succeeded to its place ⁱ.

ⁱ A parable, like the preceding, which embraces so complete a retrospect of God's dealings with the Jews, from first to last—which draws so lively a picture of his kindness, patience, and longsuffering, and of their ingratitude, obstinacy, and impenitence—which touches so closely upon the fact of that future personal treatment, which our Saviour himself was about to experience from them; was calculated to raise a variety of emotions in the mind of the speaker; from religious fervour, from pious indignation, from benevolent regret, from the sense of personal interest—all unusually excited in the subject-matter of his own representations. We cannot therefore but be surprised at the calmness of the tone and manner which pervades the narrative, down to the catastrophe; a calmness which can be paralleled by nothing so properly as the similar dispassionateness, which appears afterwards in the Gospel narrative of the passion itself.

It is a necessary effect too of such an history, as that which is contained in the parable, to justify the ways of God as much in the rejection, as in the selection of the Jews, to be his people. That selection might be the act of the free grace of God; but the free grace of God, and the immutability of the Divine counsels, cannot be pleaded in excuse for the voluntary ill-desert, which may require the subsequent alienation of the Divine favour from its former objects. The possession of his vineyard was bestowed upon the husbandmen, by the gift of the owner originally; no doubt, with the intention that it should continue theirs ever after: and yet it is no impeachment of his consistency, that after the flagrant abuse of the confidence reposed in them, after the many aggravated offences, and particularly the last and worst of all—of which they were guilty—he should be found in the end recalling and revoking his own gift. Under such circumstances, the husbandmen only could be to blame for the change produced in their relation towards him. The owner could have no alternative, but to pursue at the close of his connection with the tenants, even of his own choice, a

conduct diametrically the reverse of that which he had observed towards them, at the beginning of it.

It is another use also of the parabolic narrative, in its reference to a series of future matters of fact, to illustrate the possible, however mysterious, compatibility of the Divine predestination of events, with the freedom of human agency. The death of the son of the lord of the vineyard is historically described therein, as an event which must be considered the result of contingent causes; which was not anticipated, and which might not have happened. And so it was, with respect to the parabolic œconomy—to the mission of the son, by the father, and to his reception and treatment by the husbandmen: and yet it is not too much to say, of the actual mission of our Lord, which answers to this in the parable, that the Father sent him, and that he himself came, to sustain and discharge a part, fore-known and preconcerted, from the beginning of the world; that all these things must have been; that Christ must suffer; and that the Jews, in putting him to death, were but unwittingly the instruments in fulfilling the voices of the prophets, read among them every sabbath day.

The circumstantial discrepancies in the narratives of the different Evangelists require some little consideration, before we dismiss the parable. With respect, indeed, to these discrepancies generally—there is no reason why we should expect verbal, and not merely substantial, agreement in the accounts of our Saviour's parables, as simply the narratives of facts—any more than in the details of his general history, which consist of facts likewise. In the present instance, St. Luke's account of the parable is obviously more concise than either St. Matthew's or St. Mark's, just as his account of the parable of the sower was, compared with theirs; and probably for the same reason—that each of these parables had been so fully recorded by his predecessors, it was scarcely necessary for him to relate either, had not the one been the first which our Saviour delivered, and had not the other contained so graphic a delineation beforehand of his death and passion, and so remarkably verified, only two days after, by the event.

Yet the discrepancies in question are after all reducible to two: one of which is that St. Matthew and St. Luke speak of the ejection of the son from the vineyard, as preceding his being

put to death; St. Mark speaks of it as following after it. There is no inconsistency in these statements; for it does not appear that either of them affirms the order of the event; or does more than simply specify the fact itself, as closely connected with that of the death—and as conspiring with it to the same effect, to shew that the subject of either violence had no right to the vineyard, or none which *they* were disposed to respect, who were offering it to him. For this purpose, the casting him out of the vineyard was necessarily a part of the treatment which he must expect to receive from them—and as expressive of contempt for his rights, and of indignity to his person, as his death itself; but in what order, and whether before or after his being put to death, would be a matter of indifference, and might be related in either way.

The other circumstance of difference is, that when our Lord had arrived at that part of his narrative where he asks the question at the 40th verse in St. Matthew's, the 9th in St. Mark's, the 15th in St. Luke's account; the answer, according to St. Matthew, verse 41, was returned by others; according to St. Mark, verse 9, and St. Luke, verse 16, was returned by himself. There is no inconsistency here also; for both answers might have been returned; one by the bystanders, as related in St. Matthew, the other by our Lord himself, in prosecution of his own narrative, as recorded in St. Mark and St. Luke. For there is no reason to suppose, that in asking the previous question, he meant the answer to be supplied by his hearers, and not to be subjoined by himself; though it is very possible, that under the circumstances of the case, his hearers (especially his disciples, and the common people) could not hear such a question, subjoined to such a narrative as had preceded, and not be prompted by their own sense of justice and humanity, to return such an answer to it.

But St. Luke adds, that when those about our Lord had heard his last words, as recorded at verse 16, they said, "God forbid:" which seems to be attributing to them an answer directly contrary to that which also is ascribed to the bystanders in St. Matthew. The way to reconcile these representations with each other is, to suppose that one part of the bystanders made the observation in St. Luke, and another in St. Matthew; and on this principle Theophylact reconciles them, *Operum* i.

453. C—D. in Lucam xx. It is to be remembered that our Saviour delivered this parable in the presence of a mixed audience—not merely his disciples, but the people; and not merely the people, and such portion of them, as are said at this very time to have heard him gladly, but the Scribes and Pharisees, his enemies—who were at this very time plotting his destruction, and seeking to lay hands upon him.

Each of the Evangelists informs us, that when our Lord had done speaking, his enemies would gladly have carried this design of theirs against him into execution, on the spot; and according to each, for the same reason, that they perceived he had been speaking the parable against them: whence, though it may not follow that they must have understood the full meaning of the parable, which they resented accordingly, yet it would, that they knew it to be levelled against themselves, and in some manner or other to contain a denunciation against them. It might contribute to direct their attention to its drift, and to raise the expectation of its containing something personal to themselves, that it followed directly upon Matt. xxi. 28—32. an illustration which had been applied against them; and it was prefaced by the words, *ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε*—in reference doubtless to what had preceded in the form of a parable also

The interposition of such an exclamation, from such a quarter, at this period of the narrative, is necessary to explain the sequel, to the end of the account, in each of the Gospels; Matthew 42—44: Mark 10—11: Luke 17—18: and especially in St. Luke's; first as to what he mentions of our Lord's looking steadfastly at them, in consequence of it, and then, his subjoining the words, "What then is this which is written?" before quoting the 22nd and 23rd verses of the cxviiith Psalm, as he proceeds to do in all the accounts. This steadfastly looking at them, before he said any thing—(the proper meaning of *ἐμβλέψας αὐτοῖς*: compare Luke xxii. 61.) implies that they had done something to provoke it; to direct attention to them more particularly: and the form of the words in which he introduces the quotation from the Psalm, "What then is this which is written?" or, as St. Mark expresses it, "Have ye not read even 'this scripture?'" leads further to the inference, that if he had said any thing to produce such an exclamation, as it was, he was going to say something still more calculated to excite it.

It may well be supposed, that an observation, proceeding from Scribes and Pharisees, or any of those who were declared enemies of our Lord, in answer to a denunciation proceeding from him, and threatening them with some penal consequence or other—would be founded in scorn and contempt; arising, no doubt, from the presumed incompetency of the speaker to carry any of his menaces into effect; in which case, they might safely be despised and set at defiance. If such was the motive which prompted the exclamation, in this instance, or such the thought secretly passing in the minds of those who uttered it; how appositely might our Lord both pause a while, steadfastly to look upon them, and then proceed to quote the Psalm in question, in such words as these, “What then is this which is written?” “Have ye not read even this scripture?” “As to the stone, which they that were building reprobated, this is become for the head of a corner? This head is become *so* of the Lord; and it is wonderful in our eyes:” concluding as St. Matthew represents him, “For this reason, I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation producing the fruits thereof. And he that hath fallen upon this stone, shall be dashed to pieces: and on whomsoever it may fall, it shall grind him to powder.”

This image of the stone, which they that were building rejected or reprobated, and which yet had become fit to be the head of a corner, is ascribed to our Saviour, by St. Peter, Acts iii. 11: and the builders who had rejected it, are represented personally as the Scribes and Pharisees, or leaders of the Jews also. The rejection of the stone, by the builders, in a supposed process of building, implies its want, in their estimation, of those qualities, which must make it fit to form part of a building—the qualities of strength and solidity; its being become the head of a corner, in an actual building, implies its possession of such qualities in the utmost possible degree. A corner-stone in a building, like the key-stone in an arch, must possess the usual qualities which make stones fit to support their share of the burden, and to contribute their share to the strength of a building, in a degree beyond any other component part of it whatsoever. But the rejection of the stone is attributed to its supposed deficiency in such qualities, in the estimation of human builders; its becoming the head of a corner, and its con-

sequent possession of the requisite properties, in the highest degree, to a power and sufficiency derived from God. All this was applicable to our Saviour's own situation at the time, and to the judgment which his enemies had passed upon him; and to the degree of power and exaltation, short only of the Divine, in that very capacity—at present, to all appearance, so weak and contemptible—to which he should hereafter be advanced: the certainty of which, to carry on the same metaphorical description, would be shewn by nothing so much as the defensive, and offensive property of the same corner-stone; the former in resisting all the attacks which should be made upon it, and dashing to pieces those who should encounter it, the latter in its power to exterminate, when it should itself become the assailant, and to grind unto powder all on whom it should fall. The first of these powers is conservative, and necessary to the protection of the church which rests upon that corner-stone, from all those assaults of various kinds, to which it is, and it must be exposed, during the continuance of its state of probation: the latter is destructive or penal, and subservient to that final œconomy of redress in behalf of the church, and of vengeance upon its enemies, which its head and protector will ultimately carry into effect, in order that the state of probation may be succeeded by the state of retribution. Yet in its primary sense, this allusion to the double power of the same stone, might be understood by the hearers to refer to a custom of their own, in inflicting the punishment of stoning; according to which, we are told, that the head of the criminal was first dashed against one large stone: and if that did not prove fatal, another was cast upon the top of it—which invariably served to dispatch him.

PARABLE TWENTY-FIFTH.
ALLEGORICAL.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON, OR
THE WEDDING-GARMENT.

MATTHEW, XXII. 1—14. HARMONY, IV. 69.

MATTHEW, xxii. 1—14.

¹ And Jesus answered and spake to them again in parables, saying, “² The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man, a king, who made a wedding-feast for his son. ³ And he sent forth his servants to call to the wedding-feast them that had been bidden: and they were not willing to come. ⁴ Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Say to them that have been bidden, Behold, my dinner have I made ready, my oxen and my fatlings have *been* slain, and all things *are* ready: come ye to the wedding-feast. ⁵ And they, having paid no regard *to it*, went their way, one to his own farm, another to his traffick: ⁶ and the rest of them, having laid hold on his servants, abused *them* and slew *them*. ⁷ And when the king had heard *thereof*, he was angered; and having sent his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸ Then saith he to his servants, The wedding indeed is ready, but they that had been bidden were not worthy. ⁹ Go ye therefore to the outlets and passages of the highways, and as many as ye may have found, bid ye to the wedding-feast. ¹⁰ And those servants went out into the highways, and brought together all, as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was replenished with guests. ¹¹ And the king having come in, to take a view of the guests, saw there a man not clad with

“ a wedding-clothing. ¹² And he saith unto him, Comrade, how hast thou come in hither, not having a wedding-clothing? And he became speechless. ¹³ Then said the king to them that ministered, Bind ye his hands and feet, and take him up, and cast *him* forth into the darkness which is without; there shall be weeping, and the gnashing of the teeth. ¹⁴ For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”



MATERIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE subject-matter of the history, in the present parable, being the projected celebration of a certain entertainment, and the circumstances connected with the execution of that design—the parabolic relation of the parties concerned in it, is naturally that of the author of the feast, who conceives and executes the design, on the one hand, and that of the guests for whom it is intended, and with whom it must be celebrated, on the other. But the private or individual character of the master of a feast—may differ in a variety of ways from his relative one to his guests; and in a given instance, the proper personal description of the former, whatever it be, may impose a proper corresponding character on the latter. This private character of the author of the feast, independent of his relation in that respect, it appears, is that of a king; and the consequent character superinduced upon his guests, is that of his subjects.

The fact of a certain entertainment implies also a certain end and purpose, for which it must be supposed to be given; especially where the entertainment, under the circumstances of the case, is of an

extraordinary nature. The entertainment in the parable is of this special description ; being projected and given by the king to commemorate the marriage of his son. Of the possible solemnities, then, which might have answered to the idea of this extraordinary entertainment, the solemnity of a marriage-feast is truly that which is represented by it ; and of the possible occasions, whether in public or in private life ; which might require a peculiar mode of celebrating them, the occasion of a marriage, and that the marriage of a king's son, produces the celebrity in the parable.

Among all nations, a marriage festivity has invariably been deemed the most important and interesting of domestic events ; and even in private life has always been commemorated with corresponding solemnity—with every demonstration of joy, proper for such an occasion, with every display of pomp and splendour which is suitable to the rank, or consistent with the means, of the parties in question. The nuptials of princes differ not from those of private individuals in being occasions of greater personal interest to those who are immediately concerned in them ; but in the much greater and more effectual testimony to the sense of that personal interest, inspired by the occasion, which the possession of power and affluence, both of them more or less unbounded—enables them to render, in the sumptuousness and magnificence of the feasts which commemorate such events ; in the length of time for which they are celebrated ; in the number and variety of the guests by whom they are attended ; in the more universal sympathy with the domestic happiness of the principal parties, which their su-

perior rank and dignity of station, as the head of a nation or community, are the means of diffusing, far beyond the sphere of their personal or domestic relations.

We may assume then, of such an entertainment as this in the parable, that being a nuptial solemnity in general, it must have been an occasion of more than ordinary interest to all the parties concerned in it; being the marriage feast of a king's son in particular, it must have possessed the characteristic qualities of such an occasion, to a degree unexampl'd in other instances of like kind: the extent of its preparations, the number of its guests, the costliness and splendour of the celebrity, must have been worthy of the nuptial festivities of royalty. There is no reason, indeed, why the king in the parable may not be considered some eastern monarch; and the marriage of his son, consequently, the nuptial solemnity of an eastern prince. The love of magnificence is eminently characteristic of the nations of the East, and displays itself upon all occasions where there is room for its indulgence. The marriage festivities of their princes are celebrated upon a scale of grandeur of which the nations of the West can scarcely form an idea; the wealth and resources of empires being lavished upon them, and the inventions of art and ingenuity exhausted, to devise new modes of enjoyment, and to reflect new lustre upon every such occasion, by kinds and degrees of ornament and decoration, before unheard of^a.

^a Plutarch, *Operum* viii. 647. *Symposiaca*, iv. 3: devotes a chapter to the discussion of the question, *διὰ τί πλείστους ἐν γάμοις ἐπὶ δεῖπνον καλοῦσιν*; and among the reasons which he assigns in

To be invited then to partake of a festivity like this, and much more to be actually admitted to it as

explanation of this fact, he observes, οὐδεμίαν ἐστίασεως πρόφασιν οὕτως ἔκδηλον εἶναι καὶ περιβόητον, ὡς τὴν τῶν γαμούντων· καὶ γὰρ θύοντας θεοῖς, καὶ προπέμποντας φίλον καὶ ξενίζοντας, ἔστι πολλοὺς διαλαθεῖν τῶν ἐπιτηδείων· ἡ δὲ γαμήλιος τράπεζα κατήγορον ἔχει τὸν ἰμέμιον μέγα βοῶντα, καὶ τὴν δᾶδα, καὶ τὸν αὐλόν, ἃ φησὶν "Ὀμηρος καὶ τὰς γυναικάς ἰσταμένας ἐπὶ ταῖς θύραις θαυμάζειν καὶ θεᾶσθαι. διὸ μηδενὸς ἀγνοοῦντος τὴν ὑποδοχὴν καὶ τὴν κλῆσιν, αἰσχυρόμενοι παραλιπεῖν, πάντας τοὺς συνήθεις καὶ οἰκείους, καὶ ἀμωσγέπως προσήκοντας αὐτοῖς παραλαμβάνουσιν.

Certain it is, that the most remarkable instances of entertainments, celebrated on the largest scale, and with the greatest profusion and magnificence, of which ancient history preserves the mention, are wedding festivities. Herodotus vi. 126—131, has given an account of one of them, belonging to a time of very remote antiquity, (about B. C. 500,) in the case of Clisthenes, tyrant of Sicyon, when celebrating the nuptials of his daughter Agariste. Diodorus Siculus, xiii. 84, describes the festivities with which Antisthenes, a rich citizen of Agrigentum, about B. C. 414, celebrated the marriage of his daughter. On that occasion, all the citizens of Agrigentum were entertained, at his expense, on tables laid for them at their own doors, in the streets where they lived; besides a great number of strangers from the neighbourhood. The Metæcs of Agrigentum, with the population of the city at that time, are said to have amounted to 200,000. The festivities took place in the evening, and the whole city was one blaze of light. In Athenæus, again, iv. 2—5, there is an account of the marriage-feast of Caranus, the Macedonian, about B. C. 300, on a scale of great magnificence, though by a probable error in the reading, the number of guests is represented at only 20. The editor conjectures 120, which itself is probably too little. In the same author, xii. 54, there is a minute description, from the tenth book of Chares, τῶν περὶ Ἀλέξανδρον ἱστοριῶν, of the marriage entertainments celebrated by Alexander, (upon his return from his Indian expedition,) for five days' time, and on a scale of the utmost grandeur and magnificence. Ælian, Variæ Hist. viii. 7. has abridged the account of Chares. Ninety marriages were thus celebrated at one

a guest, it is manifest would be a personal distinction, not to be meanly esteemed, and a personal privilege not to be lightly forfeited, to whomsoever it might be offered. It is a distinction, however, and a privilege, which, under the circumstances of the case, could be offered by none but the king—the principal personage in the celebrity itself—nor conferred upon any but his own subjects, as the subordinate parties in the same; and therefore as offered by him, and as conferred upon them, the distinction would be enhanced, and the privilege would be rendered proportionably the more valuable, by coming from one so much their superior; and by communicating even to the subjects a personal interest in an occasion of joy and festivity, properly confined to the family of their king.

time, in as many *θάλαμοι*: the *ἀνδρῶν* or guest-chamber being *ἐκατοντάκλιος*. Plutarch, Alexander, 70. tells us the number of guests was nine thousand. Cf. Zonaras, Ann. iv. 14. 195. B.

Nuptial solemnities among the Jews were celebrated for seven days: see Judges xiv. 12. Cf. Tobit xi. 19. So had they been in the East from time immemorial. Genesis xxix. 27.

It does not distinctly appear that the series of entertainments which the book of Esther, i. 1—10, describes king Ahasuerus to have given, first to his nobles and princes, for 180 days, or half a Persian year, and afterwards for seven days, to all the people, were nuptial festivities; yet it is not improbable, considering the part which Vashti his queen is said to have taken in the same. To the duration of such festivities, and probably to the magnificence with which they were celebrated, Roman history would perhaps have supplied a parallel instance, had the particulars been transmitted to us of those shows and entertainments, which it appears from Dio, apud Xiphilinum, lxxviii. 15. Trajan celebrated at Rome, for 123 days successively, in the interval between U. C. 862 and U. C. 864. Vide my Supplementary Diss. 222.

The conception of the design of every entertainment is naturally prior to its consummation; and the interval between them, whether greater or less in itself, is naturally devoted to making such preparations as necessarily arise from the design, and are necessarily preliminary to the execution. The interposition of an interval so devoted, appears in the parable between what must be supposed the first formation of the design, and what is actually seen to be the first step towards its execution; for after relating in general terms, that a certain king made a wedding-feast for his son, which involves the conception of the design, and leaves to implication the fact of the preparations—it passes at once to the point of time when all things were ready, and the guests were expected to attend. There are two periods consequently in the entire duration of the history—one bearing date with the conception of the design of the feast, the other with the first overt step towards its execution; between which some interval must have elapsed, and as referred to either of which the resulting duration of the whole, may be materially different.

The conception of the design of an entertainment beforehand, supposes the invitation of the guests beforehand also; and the history recognises the truth of this supposition by shewing that, as there was a proper person, with whom the idea of the solemnity originated, so there were others, designed to partake of it, even before the time of its celebration was come; whom it calls τούς κεκλημένους, or “them that had been bidden.”

The guests thus invited, it is reasonable on

various accounts to presume, must have been the fittest persons to whom such a privilege as this could have been offered beforehand ; not indeed as the equals of the principal party in the celebrity, which as his subjects they could not possibly be, but among his subjects in general, (all standing in the same relation to himself of inferiors and dependents,) as that class in particular, who, for reasons peculiar to themselves, were most deserving to be made the associates even of their monarch, for the time being, and to be admitted as guests to his table ; that class who were most likely to feel, and most proper to be permitted to evince, a personal interest in such an event as the marriage of their king's son. The fitness in question, however, and the reasons on which the presumption of it was founded, must be understood of the supposed deserts of the persons invited on those accounts, *beforehand*, and as producing the supposed distinction in their favour, above the rest of the subjects of the same king, *against* the time of the solemnity itself. With this restriction, it is not impossible that an antecedent presumption of their personal worthiness, might be consistent with the discovery of their personal unworthiness at last ; and the conduct which they might pursue, with respect to availing themselves ultimately of the distinction intended for them, or not, might be not more at variance with what was expected from them by the king, than with what was due to themselves.

The fact of the invitation of these guests is clearly implied ; but the mode in which it was conveyed to them is not specified ; yet, though made before the

time appointed for the celebration of the feast, its being repeated again when all things were ready, takes it for granted, that as it had been made beforehand, so it had been accepted beforehand, and by its acceptance had laid the parties invited, under a previous obligation to attend, on receiving due notice of the time, which could not be subsequently disregarded, without not only a personal affront to the author of the invitation, but also a deliberate violation of a promise or covenant, which they themselves were bound to perform. On these two accounts, both as invited beforehand, for reasons peculiar to themselves, and as laid by the previous acceptance of the invitation under a previous obligation to attend, the guests of this description may obviously be called, guests of the first order, in opposition to any others, whom the course of events may shew to be subsequently concerned in the possession or enjoyment of any such privilege, as that which was originally intended for them.

Recognising the fact of the conception of the future entertainment, and clearly presupposing the intermediate consummation of all the necessary preparations; the details of the narrative begin with the promulgation of the summons to the guests to attend, and are brought to a close, when the celebration of the feast was at hand. The œconomy of the parable, therefore, is strictly comprehended between these extremes, the time of the first promulgation of the invitation to the feast, and the time of its actual celebration; that is, between the first overt step and the last, towards the execution of the design originally proposed—the commemoration of the mar-

riage of the son of the king by an appropriate wedding festivity—which could not begin at an earlier period than the one, nor be delayed to a later period than the other. It follows, consequently, that the character and relation of *all* the subordinate parties concerned in it as guests, is the character and relation, from first to last, of guests invited, but not of guests admitted, to partake of the festivity in question. It is a character and relation therefore, which under the circumstances of the case, admitted of being lost in some instances, as well as retained in others, before the arrival of the point of time when only the privilege of the guest invited could be consummated in that of the guest admitted.

Now though an invitation to such a solemnity as this in the parable, might have been given and received for any length of time beforehand—and though it is but consistent with the nature of the occasion to suppose that it must have been both given and accepted by the proper parties some time beforehand; yet the usage of antiquity, and so far a regard to historical decorum, rendered it necessary that it should be described to be repeated, at the time appointed for the actual celebration of the festivity, even to the persons who had been invited already^b. In the East the proper time for the celebration of a wedding feast, (as indeed, under all circumstances, for the celebration of their principal repast in the course of the same day,) is the evening. At this point of time, then, or against this point of time, on the appointed day, the repetition of their invitation is supposed to be made to those

^b Vide supra, vol. iii. 407, 408.

who had already received it ; a repetition coinciding with that period in the history of the preparations for the celebration of the banquet, when every thing which depended on the master of the entertainment, and which must be left exclusively to him—down even to the sending of the notice to his guests—having been duly completed, nothing remained, in order to the actual celebration, but what the guests must do for themselves ; remembering the fact of their previous engagement, considering themselves morally bound to comply with its terms, whether personally convenient or inconvenient to themselves—and by a prompt and cheerful attention to the commands of the king, desiring to shew themselves not unworthy of the distinction which he had condescended to bestow upon them.

A notification of this kind, however, could not be described as conveyed from the principal to the subordinate parties, in a manner consistent with his personal dignity, except through the medium of messengers ; who might bear the invitation of the king to his subjects, without prejudice to the superiority of his rank and station. The author of a projected entertainment, whether a marriage feast, or any occasion of like kind, in public or in private life, may naturally be supposed the head of an household also ; and while he may stand in one relation to the parties designed to partake of his entertainment, he may stand in another to the members of his own family. It is a necessary consequence then of the course of proceedings from this time forward, when every preparation being over, the celebration of the feast should have begun ; that

it brings into action the services of another class of subordinate characters, whose personal relation to the master of the feast, is that of his servants, and whose parabolic character is that of his emissaries to his guests. This personal relation is the same in all these servants, and the office which they discharge, in subserviency to the œconomy in the parable, is the same in them all likewise. They are all alike, in private, the members of the household of the king; and they are all alike, in their public capacity, his messengers to his guests.

The purpose, however, for which their services are first and properly wanted, is not to convey the invitation to any, for the first time, but to repeat it to persons, who had already received it—by announcing to them that the time, against which they had been invited, was come; to notify to them, in the name of their master, that all things were ready, the preparations for the feast were completed, and nothing was wanted but their presence, that the wedding festivity might begin. It is manifest, therefore, that their duty would so far consist in reminding the persons to whom they were sent, of an existing engagement, and in persuading them to the observance of an acknowledged obligation; and the difficulty which they might have to contend with, should any such arise, would be rather the disinclination of persons not disposed to keep their own word, when put in mind of a promise,—than the repugnance of those, who might not be inclined to accept what they were at liberty, perhaps, to reject.

The message which was sent, in this first instance

of all, was followed by an unexpected effect. The guests who had already been invited, and had already accepted the invitation, when reminded of their engagement, and when told that the time for fulfilling it was arrived—refused to come. The reasons of the refusal, and under what circumstances it was made, are not specified; which may lead to the inference that, unexpected as it was, there was some ground for not considering it final; and that a renewal of the invitation, and a more distinct representation of the nature of the overture itself, might possibly cause it to succeed even with those who had rejected it once. At the same time, it must be confessed that in the case of persons who were under a previous obligation to attend upon a certain summons, this first refusal implied a growing indisposition to keep their promise, which might lead in the end to a second instance of refusal, under more aggravated circumstances; and in any case, even the first refusal might have been justly resented by the king, as a personal affront to himself, besides being a personal breach of faith in his guests; which if he was disposed to forgive, in the hope of overcoming their reluctance by a renewed urgency of persuasion, or by a clearer representation of the value and dignity of the privilege which he was offering them—the effect must be attributed to no equitable claim of theirs to such treatment, but to his own indulgence, condescension, and good-will towards them.

A second message then is sent to the same persons, who had already rejected the former; the direct effect of which is to place in a striking point of view, the benevolence, patience, and forbearance

of the principal party; and therefore to contrast these points of his conduct the more strongly with the ingratitude, the perverseness, and the aggravated ill-usage by which they are requited on the other side. The condescension and indulgence of his conduct is wonderfully enhanced, if we consider that the persons, in whose favour it is displayed, are his own subjects, who were bound to obey his commands, whether reasonable or unreasonable; who could not have resisted his power, had he been inclined to exercise it, and might easily have been intimidated into submission, even against their inclination—if submission extorted by violence, or enforced by the apprehension of punishment, could have been of a nature to please.

Two facts are connected with this renewal of the solicitation, which render it perceptibly different from the previous overture, already sent, and already disappointed of its effect. It is addressed to the same persons, but not by the same messengers. It has for its object the same compliance with the notice to attend, but the arguments by which this attendance is enforced are different. Nor is it implied, by the first of these facts, that the personal character of the servants, who came on this second message, was any thing different from that of those who had come on the former; or the duty which these had to discharge, was any thing different from that which had been discharged by those; only that the lord of a common household, commissioned as his emissaries to his guests, on this second occasion, a different class of his servants from before. Nor is it implied by the latter, that no arguments had been

used to give effect to the commission of his emissaries on the former occasion, but not such arguments as were employed for that purpose on the second.

With regard, then, to the first of these distinctions—it appears only reasonable to conjecture that the personal agency of the messengers is changed, to give additional weight to their solicitations; in other words, that the messengers sent upon the second occasion were persons of greater dignity and consequence in the household of the king, and therefore more likely to succeed with his guests, than those who had been sent on the first. And with respect to the second—it is evident that the argument which these were directed to employ, in enforcing the object of their mission, was one which endeavoured to prevail with the parties addressed, by setting forth the good-will of the king towards them; how much he had done for their reception and entertainment—the magnitude of his preparations—the adequacy of his provisions—which left nothing to be desired for the utmost enjoyment of the pleasure and festivity which might be expected upon such an occasion, but a cheerful compliance with his summons on the part of the guests ^c. Such

^c The king attempts to prevail upon his guests to attend the summons to his feast, by setting forth the nature and extent of his preparations, and commissioning his servants to say to them, “ My dinner have I made ready, my oxen and my fatlings have been slain—and all things are ready.” In like manner is Adonijah’s feast spoken of, 1 Kings i. 25; “ For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king’s sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold,

an argument, enforced by the deference due to the personal character of those who were commissioned to employ it, was the more likely to succeed. It must be confessed, at least, that the personal character of the messengers, and the kind of persuasion which they were instructed to employ, upon this supposition were the more in unison with each other, and both together a stronger proof of the kindness and condescension of the king.

But by a strange disappointment of probabilities, which could never have been expected, except on the supposition that gentleness and forbearance on one side would be opposed by obstinacy and perverseness on the other; the more was done to bring the parties in fault to a sense of their duty, the more they were confirmed in their obduracy; and the more likely it seemed to succeed, the more complete was its ill-success. The second mission failed of its purpose as well as the former; and the second failure was accompanied with circumstances of ag-

“ they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adon-
“ ijah.” In Proverbs also, ix. 1—5, the preparations of Wisdom are similarly described, and set forth as an inducement to her guests to come to her feast.

“ Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her
“ seven pillars:

“ She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine;
“ she hath also furnished her table;

“ She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the high-
“ est places of the city,

“ Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: *as* for him that
“ wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

“ Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine *which* I have
“ mingled.”

gravation which had not attended the former. The refusal of the guests at that time, proceeded no further than a simple inattention to the message of the king; it proceeds to insult and outrage, much beyond a simple refusal, on this occasion; not only repeating the former offence, and shewing the same indifference, or the same aversion to the message, as before, but what is worse, evincing a spirit of personal enmity to its author, by the wanton abuse, and even the murder of his messengers.

While, then, the candour of the parabolic narrative is justly to be admired, in not supposing the obstinacy of the guests, at first invited, to arrive all at once at such an extremity as this; yet its regard to consistency, in ascribing to them a species of conduct at last, which was naturally to be expected from what they had been seen to do already, is equally observable; for they who had begun by one unjustifiable action, might well be supposed capable of following it up by others, to the like effect; and having once already violated their own good faith, would not easily be brought to the sense of their duty by any argument afterwards addressed to them. Therefore perhaps it is, that the account of the motives which must have operated with them from the first, is reserved for this period of their history, when it became necessary to assign the causes which led to the failure of the second mission. The effect of these motives was summarily mentioned before; the motives themselves are explained and specified now: and it appears from this explanation, that while the common effect of them all was the same indifference to the kindness of the king, and the same mean opinion of the honour

which he designed his guests—yet it was an effect which shewed itself in a distinction of personal conduct, according to the tempers or circumstances of the parties addressed. One went away to his merchandise, or rather to his traffick—another to his farm, or rather to his estate in the country ; with each of whom, it is to be presumed, some other more personally urgent care, or more attractive engagement, was considered to be paramount to his duty to the king, and a sufficient excuse for his individual neglect of attendance at the wedding of his son ; with the former, the cares of business, properly so called, with the latter, the desire of pleasure, the love of his personal ease and enjoyment. And in these two producing causes of a common indifference to the overture received from the king, enforced as it was—we are not to suppose we see the motives which operated in two isolated cases ; but the causes which led to the failure of the overture with two comprehensive classes among those who had all been invited, and who all neglected the invitation in common. The rest—by whom we must understand the remainder of the same number, distinct from these, and consequently a third comprehensive class among the body of guests—laid hands on the servants of the king, and after abusing them previously, or treating them with personal insult and indignity of some kind or other, made an end of the whole by putting them to death. For so incredible an outrage, as the only answer returned by this class of guests to the kindness and condescension of the message just received, it would be impossible to assign any reason, but an utter dislike of the invitation as repeated on the part of the king, or a

thorough hatred of the quarter from which it proceeded ; and no mere feeling of indifference to the one, or simple contempt of the other. We observe, then, in these various kinds of refusal the evidence of a triple gradation in the moral complexion of the motives which led to the failure of the overture of the king, in this second instance ; as well as three classes of persons, addressed by the overture, with each of whom one of the motives in question is the producing cause of its failure. The motive which operated with the men of business was more specious than that which prevailed with the lovers of pleasure ; and the reason which operated with either, than the spirit of personal malice and wanton aggression, which instigated the third class of all.

The result of this second mission, under the circumstances of the case, must evidently be regarded as final. To have repeated the overture a third time, to persons who had twice already rejected it, and in the second instance, with so much additional provocation, to testify their dislike of the offer, and their hatred or contempt of its author, would have been worse than useless ; besides being repugnant to reason and consistency. If there was any difference in the causes which produced the refusal of the overture, and any thing less offensive in the mode in which a common dislike to the offer had expressed itself, in some instances compared with others ; and consequently, if the particular share of some in a common offence, might not be so aggravated as that of others, nor therefore the kind or degree of the common resentment to which it was entitled on the part of the king, proportionably so severe in their

instance, as in that of the rest—yet the injuries inflicted on the king's servants by a part of their body, for no other reason than the simple discharge of their duty as the bearers of an overture from himself, full of condescension and honour to his guests, evidently demanded instant punishment, and could not be passed over without adequate and condign redress.

It was natural, then, that upon hearing of the result of his second message, and especially of the violence done to his messengers—the good-will of the king towards his intended guests, should be converted into resentment. His anger, however, was discriminating, as well as natural; and though all had concurred in refusing his invitation, and so far had put an affront upon him in common, which was calculated to excite his indignation against them, the effects of his displeasure, in their worst and most serious form, fell only on those who had shed the blood of his servants.

Two things, therefore, were now to be done; to transfer the invitation, rejected by those for whom it had first been intended—to others, who might accept it; and to execute vengeance on that part of their number who had murdered the servants of the king: the first of which would so far be a retribution in kind even upon those who had done nothing to provoke a worse punishment; the second was an additional retributive dispensation in a particular instance, for an additional specific offence. It is possible that both these acts might be going on in conjunction; but if in the reason of things, the account of both could not be given at once, and one

of them was more essential to the progress of the narrative than the other; the interposition of the other first must be considered a digression, produced by the necessity of the case. Now to the direct continuation of an history, concerned with the business of the tender and acceptance of one and the same invitation, preparatory to the celebration of one and the same entertainment; the account of the transfer of the invitation, under the circumstances of the case, as rejected by one order of guests, to another by whom it might possibly be accepted, was obviously of more importance, than the account of those penal consequences, in addition to the loss of the privilege intended for them, to which the first order of persons might have rendered themselves liable by the rejection in question, and which might, therefore, be expected some time or other to fall upon them on that account. If so, the proper action of the parable, or at least the proper thread of the narrative of that action, is suspended at this point of time, to give an account of the punishment, over and above the simple deprivation of the common privilege of guests, which deserved to be inflicted on those in particular, who besides the common offence of rejecting the invitation, had been guilty of the additional and much more aggravated crime, of putting its bearers to death.

The kind of vengeance which the king inflicts upon them, is such as a king might naturally be expected to take upon personal enemies, who had defied his power, and personal aggressors who had provoked his retaliation. The penal consequences of this resentment are reducible to two effects; the

individual destruction of those murderers, first, and the burning up of their city, next; the instruments in the execution of both, being the armies of the king himself—not, however, as conducted by him to the work of vengeance and destruction in person, but as sent forth, and commissioned to perform it, in his behalf: a distinction of critical importance to the matter of fact which answers to this part of the representation in the parable. The mission of armies, as necessary to the infliction of condign punishment upon the particular offence of this part of the guests, and the mention of their city, as such, imply that the murderers of the servants of the king, were an integral division of his subjects, and constituted an independent community, living by themselves; while from the effect of his resentment both upon them and their dwelling-place, it is evident that the vengeance of the king aimed at nothing less than their utter extermination; and consequently if its very infliction supposes them to be his subjects, the nature of its effects demonstrates them to be considered and treated as rebels and enemies.

The design of the king to celebrate such an event as the marriage of his son by an appropriate festivity, which had been formed prior to the promulgation of an invitation to any description of guests, was not likely to be changed by the refusal of the persons at first invited, to accept of the privilege intended for them. Thus it is, that after relating the particulars of the intermediate œconomy just considered, when the parable returns to the prosecution of its proper subject, it supposes the king to say to his servants, “The wedding indeed is ready,” and

by parity of consequence, the wedding-feast. The marriage and the marriage solemnity, for which every preparation has been made, must proceed. "But they who had been bidden were not worthy." The event has proved that in designing them to partake of this festivity, I intended them an honour and a privilege which they did not deserve. The favour and distinction of being present as guests at the marriage of my son, must be transferred to others; by whom it will be esteemed and accepted, as it deserves.

If any change, then, was necessarily to ensue in the course and progress of the transaction from this time forward, in consequence of the defect of the guests at first invited; it was not in the resolution of the king to celebrate the nuptials of his son,—nor in the nature and mode of the celebration which would always be requisite to commemorate such an event; but in the description of persons, with whom as common parties in the joy and interest of the occasion, along with the members of his own family, he must design thenceforward to celebrate it. Yet the necessity of this change itself, was the consequence of an unforeseen and unexpected emergency; and occurred at too critical a period, not to have the effect of retarding for some time longer the actual consummation even of a solemnity, which so far as regarded all the preliminaries to it, except the presence of guests, was before ready to have begun.

As to the new selection of persons, to whom the offer of the privilege, rejected by those for whom it had first been intended, was next to be made; it must be left to the pleasure and discretion of the mas-

ter of the feast. It was not to be expected that without orders from him, his servants would undertake to transfer the offer of his invitation, any more than to have originally made it. And whatsoever in other respects, the persons might be, to whom they should now be directed to offer it—one thing is certain—they must be distinct from those to whom it had first been offered; and consequently if those were properly to be called guests of the first order, their successors in the offer of the invitation must be called guests of the second order. It would follow too, from the necessity of this personal distinction between the members of these several orders, that if the offer of the invitation had been made to the one, under a presumption beforehand, that they were *worthy* of it in a certain sense; it could not be transferred to the other, under any such presumption that they were *worthy* of it in the same sense: and therefore if the offer, before, was so far limited and select in its objects, the transfer of it now was unlimited and indiscriminate. And though the particular nature of the worthiness is not specified in the one instance, nor consequently is the particular nature of the unworthiness, specially opposed to it, to be collected in the other; it may still be inferred, that as the supposed possession of that worthiness had not prevented the alienation of the offer from one quarter, so the presumed defect of it would be no obstacle to its being transferred to another.

A third mission of the servants of the king accordingly takes place; between which, and the former two, there is no difference in the relative character of the agents, employed upon it, as the servants of the

same master, and his messengers on the same errand ; nor in the final end of their commission, which is the provision of guests for the wedding feast of his son ; but there is a great difference in the persons to whom they are sent, and among whom their commission is to be discharged. The beginning of this new dispensation, for reasons already stated, must be dated from the time, when, through the failure of the second overture to the guests at first invited, the privilege of partaking in the future solemnity, at first intended as theirs, is finally and irrecoverably lost to them ; not from the point of time, when in particular resentment of a particular aggravation of offence connected with this failure, the œconomy of punishment, which ended in the extermination of a part of their number, began and was carried into effect.

The command, in obedience to which the servants go forth on this new commission, is the mandate of the king himself. The quarters to which they are sent are described as the *διέξοδοι τῶν ὁδῶν* : the outlets and passages of the high-ways. The business on which they are sent thither is to collect and bring in guests, with no further special description of the persons themselves, than as all soever whom they might find. Now, if by the designation of the quarters in question, a reference be understood to the local residence of the king, or the capital of his dominions ; the outlets and passages of the ways must be intended of the highroads leading to and from it, in every direction. The instituted search after the new supply of guests begins, then, and is carried on, in all directions, at once ; the effect of which would be, that whether in a longer or a shorter time, the wedding

must at last be furnished with guests—persons must be found, who might be brought in, in sufficient numbers for the festivity to begin. And if by the command to bring in all, as many as the servants might find, every one discovered in those localities was necessarily to be bidden ; the effect of the execution of such orders could not fail to be an indiscriminate assemblage of guests, including every variety of personal character, but all brought together by the agency of the same class of servants, in obedience to the same command of a common master, and for the same ostensible purpose, to do honour to the marriage of the king's son, and to partake themselves in the pleasure and festivity of such an occasion.

Each of these effects is accordingly seen to ensue. As the result of a general search after guests, wherever persons to whom the invitation might be offered, were to be met with, the wedding was at length furnished with guests : as the result of an indiscriminate offer of the invitation, persons of every description, both good and bad, were brought in. The use of these terms, (and of none else but these,) to discriminate the personal characters of the parties assembled under such circumstances, leads to the inference that all who were collected, and present together on the same occasion, came under one of these descriptions, or the other ; and consequently were divisible into two general and comprehensive classes, one of the good, and the other of the bad, making up the complex of the whole. The descriptive appellations themselves, which thus oppose one moiety of this complex to the other, denote no external or accidental, but certain intrinsic and real

distinctions, between one class of persons and another. They are not the rich among the number, who are thus distinguished from the poor ; the noble from the mean ; the learned from the unlearned—or the like ; but the good from the bad : and goodness or badness, as grounds of personal distinction between man and man, can be understood of nothing but the different moral characters, the virtues and the vices, of the subjects of such distinctions respectively. Moreover the good as such are so opposed to the bad, as to imply that all possible varieties and degrees of goodness, above a certain fixed standard, on the one hand, might be opposed to all possible corresponding varieties and degrees of badness, below the same, on the other—and whatsoever in the first of these instances was considered by its presence, to make the subject good, and to entitle it to that name—the absence of the same thing in the latter, must be supposed to render the subject bad, and obnoxious to that appellation.

The guests at this period of their history are called *ἀνακείμενοι*—a name, which though properly denoting those who were sitting or reclining at meat—is given them, at this point of time, not because the festivity, against which they had been collected, was actually now begun, but because it was actually on the eve of beginning ; for when the wedding was replenished with guests, which was at this point of time, nothing might seem to remain, except that the persons assembled should sit down in that quality of guests in which they had been invited, and the entertainment itself should begin. Between the assemblage of the guests, however, in

sufficient numbers for the ceremony to begin, and the actual sitting down to table, in the enjoyment of the festivity, something might still intervene—necessarily arising out of the former of these events, yet only preliminary to the latter: the nature and intent of which, if no part of the narrative can be considered destitute of its proper use and purpose with respect to the whole—is to be collected from what follows next, and extends to the end of the history.

Now the collection of guests in sufficient numbers, is followed by a review or inspection of the persons collected; and this review is undergone by them in their capacity of guests invited to the future entertainment, and is held by the king in his capacity of author of the same. It is manifest, then, that this part of the transaction is as much distinct from the celebration of the feast, as any thing which had preceded it; and though necessarily posterior to the collection of the guests, it is still prior to the commencement of the feast. It is manifest also, that it concerns the parties assembled in their capacity of guests invited, but not yet of guests admitted, as much as any thing which had yet preceded; and that it is not only prior in the order of time, but preliminary in the result of the dispensation, to the celebration of the festivity itself.

For it appears from the sequel, that the first effect of this review of his guests, as made by the king, and as undergone by the persons assembled, is to discover who had, and who had not on, what is called the wedding-clothing: the next, that the discovery of the want of this clothing in a particular instance, leads to the exclusion of the party in ques-

tion, from all further participation in the festivity, and to the consequent loss of his privilege as guest ; and such being the declared effect of the want of this garment in a particular instance, it is necessarily implied that the reverse would be the effect of its presence. It is reasonable, therefore, to presume, that the review of the guests, which takes place at this point of time, must have been a preliminary measure, designed to discover the presence or the absence of the garment in question, in particular instances ; and equally so, that the possession or non-possession of the garment itself was to be considered and treated as a test of the individual worthiness, or individual unworthiness of any, to partake of the festivity at last, in the capacity of guests admitted, entirely distinct from those general reasons which had led to the assemblage of all previously, in the capacity of guests invited. On this principle, the preliminary inspection of the assembly, with a view to a particular discovery, and the exclusion of some from the privilege of partaking in the celebration of the feast, and the admission of others to it, would be connected together, and as naturally posterior to the collection of guests, as prior to the commencement of the feast.

Occasions of rejoicing, as well as occasions of mourning, are wont to be commemorated every where, in a suitable kind of dress. The same sense of propriety seems to have taught all nations, that the clothing or attire of the body on all fit occasions, should be accommodated to the state of the mind, and to the nature of external circumstances ; and as one tone of the feelings—one conformation of the

looks and the countenance—one expression of the language, and one carriage of the person, generally—so one kind of array of the body, is becoming a funeral, and another a feast. It cannot be questioned, then, that by the *ἔνδυμα γάμου*, in the parabolic narrative, some description of garment must be understood, proper for the occasion; something as different from the ordinary dress, which might be worn at other times, as natural and appropriate to the circumstances of a marriage festivity. In this respect the customs of antiquity require no special illustration; but may derive light and explanation even from the practice of modern times—both being founded in the same dictates of reason and common sense, which every where, and at all times, have sanctioned the principle, that no one can repair with propriety into the presence of his superior, who intends to do him an honour, except in a suitable dress, nor sit down at another person's table, on an occasion of more than ordinary interest and importance to all the parties concerned in it, without being becomingly attired ^c.

^c Mr. Harmer informs us, ii. 118, 119. chap. vi. obs. xlv. that to put on *new clothes* on every occasion, and at every time, of rejoicing or festivity, is thought by the people of the East, indispensably necessary to the due solemnization of it.

Chrysostom, Opera, i. 239. A. Hom. xxi. observes, *εἰ γὰρ εἰς γάμους αἰσθητοὺς ἄνθρωποι καλούμενοι, κἂν ἀπάντων ὡσι πενέστεροι, χρησάμενοι πολλάκις, ἢ πριμέμενοι ἱμάτιον καθαρὸν, οὕτω πρὸς τοὺς καλέσαντας αὐτοὺς ἀπαντῶσι, κ', τ. λ.*

The distinction of dresses reserved for holydays, from those of every day, both male and female, is recognised in the following passage of the *Œconomica* of Xenophon: ix. 6: *μετὰ ταῦτα κόσμον γυναικὸς τὸν εἰς ἑορτὰς διηροῦμεν, ἐσθῆτα ἀνδρὸς τὴν εἰς ἑορτὰς καὶ πόλεμον, καὶ στρώματι ἐν γυναικωνίτιδι, στρώματι ἐν ἀνδρωνίτιδι, ὑποδήματα γυναικεῖα, ὑποδήματι ἀνδρεία.*

In another respect, however, connected with the observance of this very natural rule, the customs of ancient times, especially in the East, differed materially from those of modern; yet so, that under the circumstances of the case, in consequence of this difference itself, the breach of the rule in question, would necessarily appear a greater offence against decency and good manners, in ancient than in modern times. When persons of distinction gave entertainments, upon a large scale, and consequently to a proportionably numerous company of guests; dresses, proper to be worn, were distributed to every individual of the company present, by their host himself: and that they might be able to supply them, on such occasions, in sufficient numbers, the possessions of the rich in the East, from time immemorial, consisted, among other things, of large stores and collections of garments, of every size and quality, laid up in vestries or wardrobes, and constantly ready for use. The uniformity of the modes or fashions in dress, which have never been known to vary much in the East, but are nearly the same now as in periods of the most remote antiquity, rendered such collections of garments as proper for use at one time as at another; while, in case of their not being wanted, the dryness of the air and the serenity of the climate in most of the regions of the same quarter of the world, by obviating one of the chief of the natural causes which, under other circumstances, might operate to the decay and destruction of possessions of that description, qualified them to be kept, in their original freshness and integrity, almost for any length of time^d.

^d The earliest instance of the mention of raiment, as an article

As a well-known and familiar part, then, of the ceremonies usual in such instances, it must have

of value, or species of possession characteristic of wealth, occurs in the scripture account of the presents which the servant of Abraham made to Rebecca, Genesis xxiv. 53. Afterwards we find repeated allusions to this among other valuables, and instances of wealth, at all periods of the sacred history: see Genesis xlv. 22: Job xxvii. 16: Joshua vii. 21; xxii. 8: Judges xiv. 12; xvii. 10: 2 Kings v. 22: vii. 8: 2 Chron. ix. 24: xxxiv. 22, &c.

Among the peculiar enemies to the durability of such possessions as stores of garments, would be the moth, (*σῆς*),—which is no doubt the reason why the moth, *σῆς*, is mentioned, Matt. vi. 19: Luke xii. 33: as much as *βρῶσις*, rust, or canker; as one of the evils to which treasures on earth were exposed, in opposition to treasures in heaven. The former was as formidable to the security of stores of garments, as the latter to that of hoards of gold or silver; both together being supposed to make part of the notion of wealth, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. In like manner, James, v. 2, tells the rich men of his time, who had stored up treasure in the latter days, when by the national visitations coming upon their country, it was about to be all taken from them at once—that their garments were become *σητόβρωτα*, or moth-eaten, as well as their wealth, *πλούτος*, cankered, (*σέσηπε*), and their gold and their silver all over rusted, (*κατίωται*), the effect, as the context shews, of the merciless, griping, and avaricious spirit, with which they had been originally extorted, and since kept hoarded unprofitably.

Apollonius, *περὶ κατεψευσμένης ἱστορίας*, cap. 48: observes, ἡ λιβάνωτος βοτανῆ συντιθεμένη μετὰ ἱματίων κωλύει σῆτας ἐγγίγνεσθαι. Horace, Serm. ii. Sat. iii. 18:

Cui stragula vestis

Blattarum ac tinearum epulæ putrescat in arca.

Lucian, iii. 404. Epp. Saturnales 21. where the speaker in the person of a slave, is talking of the better use the rich might make of their wealth in various ways, for the benefit of their slaves, rather than letting it perish, by lying idle, and useless for every purpose; alludes to their stores of garments, among their other possessions, as what might be so applied: ἀπὸ δὲ ἱμα-

been implied in the parable, even had nothing been specially mentioned to that effect, that before the

τίων, ὅσα κὰν ὑπὸ σπητῶν διαβρωθέντα οὐκ ἂν αὐτοὺς ἀνιάσει· ταῦτα γοῦν πάντως ἀπολλύμενα, καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου διαφθαρησόμενα, ἡμῖν δοῦναι περιβαλέσθαι μᾶλλον, ἢ ἐν ταῖς κοιτίσι καὶ κίσταις, εὐρῶτι πολλῶ κατασαπῆναι.

Gemmas, marmor, ebur, Tyrrhena sigilla, tabellas,
Argentum, vestes Gætulo murice tinctas,
Sunt qui non habeant : est qui non curat habere.

Horace, Ep. ii. ii. 180.

Scindentur vestes, gemmæ frangentur et aurum :
Carmina quam tribuent, fama perennis erit.

Ovid, Amor. i. x. 61.

Seneca, De Tranquillitate Animi, cap. i. 3. Operum i. 327 : Placet non in ambitionem cubile compositum, non ex arcula prolata vestis, non mille ponderibus aut tormentis splendere cogentibus pressa : sed domestica et vilis, nec servata, nec sumenda sollicitè.

Xenophon tells us, Cyropædia viii. iii. 3. that Cyrus distributed among all his nobles, Μηδικὰς στολὰς· παμύλλας γὰρ παρεσκευάσατο, οὐδὲν φειδόμενος, οὔτε πορφυρίδων, οὔτε ὀρφνίων, οὔτε φοινικίδων, οὔτε καρκύνων ἱματίων. Alexander found at Persepolis an immense collection of valuable garments, belonging to the kings of Persia : in particular, stores of purple, (which must be understood to mean of purple raiment, the dress of royalty,) 190 years old, yet as fresh and beautiful as when new : Diodorus Sic. xvii. 70 : Plut. Alex. 36 : and among the treasures of Bagoas, a Persian nobleman, which he presented to Parmeno, was a collection of garments valued at a thousand talents : nearly 200,000 pounds : Plutarch. Alexander, 39.

Alexander made a present of five changes of men's dresses, and as many of female, to each of the eight hundred Grecian captives, whom he found at Persepolis ; Diodor. Sic. xvii. 69. Gellias, a wealthy citizen of Agrigentum in Sicily, made a present of a change of garments, (a χιτῶν, and an ἱμάτιον,) to each of five hundred persons at once ; Diodor. Sic. xiii. 83 : Valerius Maximus, iv. viii. 2 : Athenæus, i. 5. Ptolemy, the king of Egypt, contemporary with Pompey, (Ptolemy Auletes,) made a present of a suit of clothes to each of the soldiers in his army,

celebration of the banquet could begin, with the guests brought in for the purpose, garments adapted

in the war with Mithridates ; Appian, De Beilo Mithridatico exiv. The characteristic anecdote of Lucullus, related by Horace, is well known :

Chlamydes Lucullus, ut aiunt,
Si posset centum scenæ præbere rogatus,
Qui possum tot ? ait : tamen et quæram et quot habebø
Mittam : post paulo scribit, sibi millia quinque
Esse domi chlamydum : partem, vel tolleret omnes.

Horace, Epp. i. vi. 40.

The chlamys was the male Grecian cloak or mantle, answering probably to the ehlanis in the female dress. Plutarch, Lucullus, 39. adds that these chlamydes were all of purple. Aulus Gellius seems to allude to the same story, ix. 8. where he reports the following saying of Favorinus, τὸν γὰρ μυρίων καὶ πεντακισχιλίων χλαμύδων δεόμενον, οὐκ ἔστι μὴ πλείονων δέισθαι· οἷς γὰρ ἔχω προσδεόμενος, ἀφελὸν ὦν ἔχω, ἀρκοῦμαι οἷς ἔχω.

Tickets, tesserae, entitling the receivers to presents of garments, among other things, used to be issued at the *congiaria* or largesses of the emperors, or others, to the people of Rome, Dio, xlix. 43 : lxi. 18 : Suet. Neron. 12 : Dio, lxvi. 25. Nerva, being desirous to raise money for the expenses of the government, in the least oppressive way, caused large quantities of clothes, belonging to the imperial wardrobe, to be publicly exposed to sale : Dio, lxxviii. 2. And in his war with Trajan, Decebalus, king of Dacia, besides disposing of his other treasures in a different way, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Romans, concealed his stores of *ἰμάτια* in caves : Dio, lxxviii. 14.

Cf. Lysias apud Oratores Atticos, xii. 19, 20 : Joseph. Ant. Jud. xii. ii. 15, &c.

Ant. Jud. viii. iii. 8 : it is said that Solomon provided for the service of the first temple, 10,000 vestures of linen, (byssus,) 10,000 girdles of purple, intended for the priests ; and 200,000 vestures of linen, for the use of the Levites : and B. vi. v. 2. we are told that immense quantities of vestures, along with other valuables, laid up in the gazophylacia, were destroyed along

to such an occasion as a marriage festivity, and therefore properly to be called and considered, ἐνδύματα γάμου, or wedding-dresses, had been provided for each of the company present, out of the vestry of the king; without wearing which they could not be received into the guest-chamber itself, much less could expect to be admitted to the entertainment. It is to be presumed that so necessary a preliminary step would be taken in each instance with every guest, before ushering him into the guest-chamber; that is, as often as an individual guest was brought in, and so one more was added to the number of the company present, that the dress which it was requisite for him to wear, would be tendered to him, at the same time, and put on, or expected to be put on, by him, before he could take his place among the rest.

This part of the ceremony, therefore, must have been over, or may well be supposed to have been over, in every instance, before the personal review of his guests by the master of the feast could have an opportunity of taking place; and yet the object

with the second temple, in the fire that consumed it. We read also, 2 Kings x. 22. Ant. Jud. ix. vi. 6, that the temple of Baal in Samaria, in the time of Jehu, was provided with a wardrobe or vestry, competent to supply each of the worshippers assembled by him, upon that occasion, who were doubtless many thousands in number, with an appropriate dress.

Mr. Harmer's Observations, ii. 11. ch. vi. obs. ii. and especially the extract from sir John Chardin, Ibid. 87. obs. xxx. will supply further information concerning the practice of the East still to collect and preserve stores of garments, and of the use made of them, either as presents from superiors to inferiors, or for purposes of more distinction than common.

of that review might be to discover who had, and who had not provided himself with the necessary dress, in quality of guest invited, before any sat down in quality of guest admitted. It must take place, then, after the assemblage of the guests was complete; and it might take place in the guest-chamber itself; but it must take place before the celebration of the feast, and if it was transacted in the guest-chamber, it must be immediately before the guests sat down to table^e.

Now an inspection and examination like this, which had for its object the preliminary discovery of the fitness or unfitness of certain personal subjects to partake in the enjoyment of a certain valuable privilege—and was followed by a dispensation of admittance to it, or of exclusion from it, according to the results of the scrutiny—may so far properly represent the œconomy and final end of a judicial

^e It may contribute somewhat to illustrate this part of the parable, which relates to the review or inspection of the guests, preliminary to their sitting down to meat; that there were magistrates at Athens, called *γυναικονόμοι*, whose business it was to count or review the guests at parties, to discover whether their numbers exceeded the limits prescribed by law, viz. 30. Hence this allusion of the comedian Timocles, in his *Philodicastes*, Athenæus, vi. 45, 46.

Ἄνοιγεται ἤδη τὰς θύρας, ἵνα πρὸς τὸ φῶς
ᾤμεν καταφανεῖς μᾶλλον, ἐφοδεύων ἐὰν
βούληθ' ὁ γυναικονόμος λαβεῖν ἀριθμὸν

forsan (βούληθ' ὁ γυναικονόμος ἀριθμὸν ἡμῶν λαβεῖν)
κατὰ τὸν νόμον τὸν καινόν, ὅπερ εἶωθε δρᾶν,
τῶν ἐστιωμένων· ἔδει δὲ τοῦμπαλι,
τὰς τῶν ἀδείπνων ἐξετάζειν οἰκίας.

To the same effect, Menander ἐν *Κεκρυφάλῳ*, and Philochorus, ἐν *ἑβδόμῃ Ἀρθίδος*: both of whom are quoted.

process; the principal party in which, under the circumstances of the case, would be the king, in his capacity of the author of the feast; the subordinate parties, the company assembled, in their capacity of guests invited; and the question at issue in it would be, which out of that number was worthy, and which was not, to be received to the actual enjoyment of the feast, in the capacity of guests admitted: the test or criterion of this worthiness or unworthiness, in each instance, being the same, and equally personal to the individual—the possession or non-possession of a vesture proper for the occasion. And whatever be the consequences of the presence or the absence of the test in question, in each particular instance; the presence or the absence of the criterion itself is something dependent as much on the subordinate parties, who are so affected by it, as on the principal, who conducts the inquiry, and decides according to its results; for though the garment proper for the wedding, must be furnished from the wardrobes of the king, and so far be provided independent of the guests, it must be accepted and worn by them; which would require their co-operation.

To produce this conviction that the acceptance of the wedding-garment depended upon the guests, as much as its provision did on the king, and that it was their proper duty to receive it when tendered to them, and to wear it, as it was his to furnish it for them, and to offer it to their use—may justly be supposed the final end of what is described to take place in consequence of the review; when one of the company assembled was discovered to be des-

titute of the proper dress. "Comrade, how hast thou come in hither, not having a wedding-clothing?" is the question of the king to the person in fault: a question which plainly implies, that without the possession of such a garment, he knew, or should have known, there was no admission for him, even within the precincts of the guest-chamber, much less any chance of being actually allowed to partake of the feast. We read of no reply to this demand; but on the contrary, that the party, taxed with the want of the qualification in question, became speechless; which is a clear proof that he had been guilty of a voluntary omission, and had purposely neglected to provide himself with what he knew to be necessary, in order to his admission among the rest of the guests, and to be equally capable of being obtained for him, as for any of the rest, if he had wished to have it. He became silent, because he had nothing to say in his own defence. He stood convicted, therefore, by his conscience of having no right to be there, before he was treated as a stranger and intruder, by command of the king; and the punishment inflicted upon him, was but the natural consequence of the discovery of an attempt to gain admission by stealth, and in the hope of concealment, to the enjoyment of a privilege, which might have been openly obtained indeed, but only after a prescribed and definite way.

It is no objection to the truth of this inference, that one instance only of such an offender is mentioned, though we have supposed the object of the scrutiny to be the discovery of the worthiness or unworthiness of all. The moral proposed by the mention of this fact in general, was not to let us

know who was the particular offender who committed the offence, but what was the offence committed; what was the unworthiness which would disqualify any from partaking in the common festivity of the banquet, not how many might be excluded from the number of guests, on that account. This one individual, then, whose case is particularly specified, must be considered the representative of a class. The offence of which he had been guilty, was capable of being committed by more; and out of so large a number as we must suppose to have been assembled, would probably be committed by more. The detection to which it was exposed in his instance, is an argument that the same discovery awaited it, in every other; and the fact of the punishment which overtook it, in his person, is a presumptive proof that it would not escape with impunity in any other instance.

It might naturally indeed be supposed, that a promiscuous collection of guests, both good and bad, in great numbers previously, would necessarily require some review and separation of them afterwards. But the indiscriminate assemblage of persons of every shade and variety of character, must have been contemplated from the first, as the unavoidable result of the directions specially given to the servants, for the execution of their third commission. The only criterion of personal worthiness or personal unworthiness, to discriminate asunder the individuals assembled for a common purpose, which the parable can be supposed to recognise, is the presence or the absence of the same wedding-vesture; the efficacy of which is such that, with it, no previous personal defect of character could oper-

ate as a let or obstacle in the case of a particular invited guest, to disqualify him from actual admission to the feast; and without it, no personal excellence, no moral goodness of character beforehand, would avail to secure him the safe enjoyment of his privilege to the end. Yet it is not impossible, nor can we undertake to deny the probability of such a supposition—that in particular instances, the two kinds of worthiness or unworthiness, both the personal, or that which preexisted, and the imputed, or that which was acquired for the occasion, by accepting and wearing the vesture provided from the wardrobes of the king—might coincide together; in other words, that in repeated instances, they who would be found deficient in the qualification of the garment proper for the occasion, would be the same whom the history described as the *πονηροὶ*, or bad ones, brought in by the servants in the indiscriminate discharge of their commission; and they who were found to possess it, would be the *ἀγαθοὶ*, or good ones, opposed to them. For good manners are part of good morals. It seems inconceivable, at least, that any of those who are described as good, in the first instance of all, even in the ordinary acceptance of the term, would be shewn by the event wanting in a proper sense of respect to their host, and of what was due to the solemnity of the occasion, by declining the habit provided for them by him, and necessary to be worn, if they would do honour to the ceremony of the nuptials of his son.

In executing the sentence upon the unworthy guest, a reference is made to the agency of certain persons, supposed to be present at the time, and de-

signated by the name of the ministers or attendants (*διάκονοι*). There can be no question, that, under the circumstances of the case, these persons must be considered to stand in the same relation of servants to the king, as the parties before employed on the errands preparatory to the collection of guests; but the difference of the name which is given to them, and the difference of the service allotted to them, do as naturally lead to the inference that though servants of the same master in general, they are not the same class of his servants in particular: and while there may be other distinctions between them, not specified, this in particular is to be collected from what is related in the history itself; that the servants before employed, on the several errands, were the emissaries of the king for assembling and collecting his guests—the servants now employed, are his instruments or ministers for separating one part of his guests from another, and for carrying into effect the celebration of the feast.

Lastly, in the terms of the command to inflict his proper punishment on the undeserving guest, mention is made of the darkness which was without: the primary sense of which allusion is obviously to be explained by a reference to the time and circumstances under which the celebration of a festivity, like that of a wedding, especially in the East, would necessarily take place: for that time would of course be the evening, and when the night was somewhat advanced; and the festivity being celebrated, by the light of lamps or torches, in the guest-chamber appropriated to the occasion—while there was the brightness of day within, for the benefit of the inmates of that chamber, there would be the dark-

ness of night without, to all such as were excluded from it.

THE MORAL.

The connection of the material circumstances, in the preceding account, according to which the whole may be shewn to converge determinately on one result, may be briefly stated as follows :

The design of a king to celebrate the nuptials of his son, by an appropriate wedding festivity, having been duly formed, and every preparation, depending on himself, necessary to give effect to such an intention, having been duly made ; at the very time when the celebrity should have begun, a sudden delay is interposed in the further prosecution of the design, by the unlooked for defect of the presence of the guests, before invited, and until then expected to attend.

The absence of guests, previously invited, at the very time when the festivity ought to have begun—if the ceremony was still to proceed—could be repaired only by the speedy assemblage of guests, not before invited, nor before expected to attend.

The speedy assemblage of guests not before invited, as required by the urgency of the occasion, is provided for by rendering the invitation indiscriminate, and open to all, which had before been select, and confined to a few.

The effect of an indiscriminate promulgation of the invitation is an assemblage of guests, sufficiently numerous to replenish the wants of the feast, and to allow the celebrity to begin ; but like the invitation, indiscriminate.

In the interval between the collection of a sufficient number of guests and the commencement of the celebrity itself, a review or inspection of the

guests takes place in the presence of the master of the feast, and in the guest-chamber itself.

The object of this review is to discover whether each of the assembled guests was provided with a certain requisite to his being permitted to partake in the celebrity; such as was naturally to be expected from the customs of the times, and from the character of the occasion which they were met to commemorate.

The nature of this provision is such, that though it might be supplied by the master of the feast, it must be accepted by his guests; and therefore though it must be offered by him, it might be rejected by them.

The result of this inspection is the discovery that some of the assembly are provided with this requisite, and others are not: and the personal consequences of this distinction to the subjects thereof respectively, are that the former are suffered to remain in the guest-chamber, the latter are excluded from it—the former, therefore, retain their privilege of guests, and the latter lose it, each at the point of time, when the feast was about to begin, and the privilege of guest invited, was ready to be consummated in the privilege of guest admitted, to the enjoyment of the festivity.

With this state of things the parabolic narrative is brought to a close, manifestly at the moment when the original design of celebrating the nuptials of the king's son, by an appropriate festivity, as at first conceived, but hitherto of necessity delayed, is on the eve of being carried into effect.

The moral of such a representation, then, in ge-

neral must be to shew, first that a certain valuable privilege, adumbrated by the invitation of guests to partake in a sumptuous and magnificent entertainment, given by no less a personage than a king, and upon an occasion of no less joy and interest to himself, and all his dependents, than the marriage of his son—for reasons which rendered such a dispensation inevitable, was taken from those for whom it had been originally designed, and transferred to others for whom it had not at first been intended; secondly, that the privilege so taken away from the first order of guests, though irrecoverably lost to them, was not inalienably transferred to the second, but that both as originally meant for some, or as afterwards transferred to others, it depended as much on the guests to retain and secure it to the end, as on the master of the feast to offer it to their acceptance at first; and consequently as it had been lost to all of the first order, for reasons affecting them all, so it might be lost to all, or to part of the second, for reasons affecting all or part of them^f.

^f The above account of the moral of the narrative, seems to be confirmed by the words of verse 14. with which it closes; “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.” This declaration occurred before, Matt. xx. 16, at the end of the parable of the labourers; but there, as made by our Saviour himself in a distinct capacity from that of the narrator of the parable; here, as a part of the parabolic narrative, and as the last words of the speech of the king, relating to the ejection of the guest, destitute of the wedding-garment, which began to be recorded at verse 13.

The declaration, then, being understood in reference to the time and the occasion, when, and upon which, it must be supposed to have been spoken; the distinction which it draws between those who are called *κλητοί*, and those who are termed *ἐκλεκτοί*, must have been intended to apply to the assemblage of

Between the parabolic narrative, which we have just considered, and the material circumstances of

persons present: and from the opposition necessarily implied in such a distinction of one part or division of a certain complex from another—if *κλητοὶ* applies to them in one sense, *ἐκλεκτοὶ* must apply to them in a contrary sense. Hence if *κλητοὶ* must denote *bidden*, *ἐκλεκτοὶ* must denote *admitted*; and the point of the contrast between the different parts of the same assembly, all understood in the quality of guests—will turn upon this circumstance, that though many might have been *bidden*, few were found to be *admitted*. The offer of the privilege of becoming guests had been indiscriminate; the actual enjoyment of the privilege, as guests, under the circumstances of the case, was limited. The whole assemblage had partaken of the one; a part only partook of the other.

The distinction, then, of those who had been bidden in common, and of those who were admitted, individually, is evidently drawn by the words in question, between one part of the company present, and the rest. But the reasons of the distinction are not stated; and therefore must be left to be inferred from the circumstances of the case: and from these it appears that the grounds of the distinction in favour of some, to the exception of others, among the same complex, all present ostensibly in the same capacity, and for the same purpose, is nothing arbitrary, or precarious; but as much dependent upon the parties themselves, in the principle, as liable to produce such and such personal consequences upon them, in the operation; viz. the possession of a garment, proper for the occasion, the acceptance of which was as necessary to its possession, as its possession to give effect to the invitation to become a guest.

Supposing it then to have been always designed that the assemblage of the guests should be followed by their personal inspection, before the celebration of the feast began; and the object of that inspection to be the discovery which of them had provided himself with the proper garment, and which had not; the consequences of that discovery could not fail to affect each of the company individually—nor to determine to each the continued enjoyment, or the final abrogation of the privilege of guest accordingly; and so to draw a general line of distinction

the parable of the great supper, which has been already explained in its place, there is *prima facie* so

between the whole of the complex of guests, and a part of their body, before and after the same point of time ; as κλητοὶ or bidden in common, before the review, but not ἐκλεκτοὶ or admitted in common, after it. If, then, the case of the ejected guest was not to be considered an isolated one, but a specimen of the same kind of exclusion from the feast, which awaited the same kind of disqualification to become a guest at it, in every other instance—the words of the king, though delivered in reference to this case, may express the result of the review, which had led to similar consequences in every other like case ; and without professing to assign any reason for the fact, or why the event should have turned out to be so, may simply assert the fact or event itself ; that whereas many had been bidden, or invited to the feast, beforehand, few it appeared were chosen, or admitted to the feast, at last.

Both those many, and these few, however, even in this case, must be understood of the complex of guests previously assembled, not of the complex of guests who might be wanted for the feast. It was possible, that brought together as they were, by an indiscriminate invitation, and from all quarters, many more might be assembled, before the review, than were wanted for the occasion : and though out of this number, the part suffered to remain, in consequence of the review, might be small in comparison of the part excluded ; still it might be fully adequate to the necessities of the feast.

On a former occasion, when the question was put to our Lord, εἰ ὀλίγοι οἱ σωζόμενοι—he declined to answer it (at least openly) : and though he may be said to have virtually answered it, on the subsequent occasion, Matt. xx. 16, when he made the declaration, πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσι κλητοὶ, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοὶ, (if by the ἐκλεκτοὶ, in this instance, we are to understand the same as by the σωζόμενοι, in the former)—still, the distinction just suggested, with reference to the application of these terms to the two divisions of the guests in the parable, before and after the time of their review, may teach us, that albeit the ἐκλεκτοὶ may be few in comparison of the κλητοὶ, and in that sense, the σωζόμενοι in comparison of the ἀπολλύμενοι—yet it is only as opposed

obvious a resemblance, that it can scarcely be necessary to draw the reader's attention to it. This coincidence as far as it extends, is so complete, that even those circumstances in which one of these parables stands apparently most distinguished from the other,

to each other, and not in reference to *that* purpose whatever it be, for which and unto which, the many are bidden, but the few are chosen. The numbers of the *ἐκλεκτοὶ* may be few in comparison of the numbers of the *κλητοὶ*, and yet they may be amply sufficient in themselves for the purpose designed by that offer, the simple acceptance of which makes *κλητοὶ* of many, but the ultimate enjoyment of it, *ἐκλεκτοὶ* of few.

It is manifest, also, from the above account of the parable, that the same remark may be made upon it, with reference to the denomination by which it ought to be called, as upon the parable of the Great Supper. It is equally incorrect to call it "the parable of the marriage of the king's son," or "the parable of the wedding-garment:" and the only just and adequate title, which could be premised to it, to declare beforehand the purpose and effect of the narrative ensuing, would be some such an one, as "the parable of the provision of guests for the marriage of the king's son." To this title it could not be objected that it implied beforehand, what would be found to be inconsistent with the account subsequently given in the history, viz. the celebration of the marriage feast within the compass of the action embraced by it; while, with respect to every other circumstance which makes a part of the parabolic detail, arising out of the conception, but necessarily prior to the consummation of the marriage-feast in question—the provision of one order of guests, in the first instance—the substitution of another, from the necessity of the case, in the next—the separation of one part even of these, from the rest, before the festivity could begin, and be celebrated with any—as alike comprehended under the general description of one and the same series of preparations for one and the same consummation, which nevertheless does not take place within the scope of the details, however near it may approach to the point of so doing; it would be perfectly just and unexceptionable.

may possibly be the same, or differ from each other only as a generic differs from a specific idea of the same thing. The personal description of the principal personage in the one, is that of the master of an house, and in the other, is that of a king; and every king must be the master of an house, though every master of an house may not be a king. The parabolic description of the principal party in each, is the same—that of the author, provider, or maker of some entertainment. This entertainment is a supper in the one, and a wedding-feast in the other; and though every supper may not be a wedding-feast, yet every wedding-feast, in conformity to the customs of the East, must be a supper: and as the supper in the former parable was described as a *great* one, and as celebrated on a large scale; so is a wedding-feast of necessity a great supper, celebrated on a scale of grandeur and magnificence, above every thing of the same kind.

In other respects the circumstantial agreement between these two parables is so close, that though it might be drawn out in a variety of minute particulars, no one who remembers any thing of the preceding, can think it necessary that I should do this expressly, to shew its resemblance to the succeeding. Under these circumstances, it would seem to be a natural presumption, that the moral of the prior parable is either totally, or to a certain extent, the same with that of the later; and consequently that whatsoever has been established of the one, may justly be assumed of the other ^g. Nor indeed can

^g The general agreement in the respective moral import of the two parables, was in all probability the reason why St. Luke who recorded the parable of the great supper, in its proper

there be any reasonable ground for questioning the truth of this assumption, so far as the two parables really coincide; and the moral import of the latter may so far be considered anticipated by that of the former. It was observed however, on a former occasion^h, that no two of the parables, not even those which were least consecutive, that is, were delivered at the greatest distance of time asunder, were strictly tautological, or directed to a result precisely the same in each instance. Nor is the coincidence in the material structure and the circumstantial details of

place, omits this parable of the wedding-garment; though up to the time of its occurrence, in the historical order of events—his account goes along with St. Matthew's, in which we find it recorded. It is not usual with St. Luke to record any thing again, which might be considered anticipated by what he had recorded before; and except on this principle, his omission of the present parable would be the more remarkable, that it followed immediately on a parable, which, as we have seen, he does record, as well as St. Matthew, the parable of the vineyard—last explained.

As to St. Mark's omission of the parable, though he too has recorded the preceding one, I think it was sufficient to produce it, that the omission had already been supplied by St. Matthew. St. Mark's Gospel is supplementary to St. Matthew's not in the account of our Saviour's discourses, but in the narrative of the general facts of his history. There is a remarkable instance of the peculiar relation of the two Gospels to each other, as consisting more particularly in the omission of a parable by the one, which is recorded in the other—at Mark x. 31. compared with Matt. xix. 31. Harm. iv. 53. where St. Mark's narrative stops short of St. Matthew's, just on the verge of the parable of the labourers; though that was produced in part by the very last sentence which St. Mark does record, before he pauses; as appears from comparing Mark x. 31. and Matt. xix. 30. with Matt. xx. 16.

^h Vol. i. ch. 11. 136, 137.

these two parables themselves, so absolute and complete, but that with much appearance of agreement, there is distinct evidence of disagreement between them—sufficient to raise the expectation, that with a very considerable general resemblance, there should still be discovered an equally definite, particular difference, between the morals of each respectively.

For example, the present parable contains an account of two missions to the guests of the first order; the former of only one. The present parable is less circumstantial than the former, in specifying the causes which operated with the different classes of the guests of the first order, to produce the failure of their engagement in common; but more so, in describing the treatment, which over and above the rejection of the invitation of the master of the feast, his servants, who were the bearers of it, experienced at the hands of the guests: that is, the latter parable is more concise, where the former had been more particular, and is supplementary where that had been defective. The former specified no penal consequence, in the way of retribution, as falling on the guests who had been guilty of the breach of their own faith, and of the refusal of the invitation of the master of the feast, except the simple alienation of the privilege, of which they had proved themselves unworthy, irrecoverably from them; the latter, not only specifies this, but over and above it—the fact of a particular retribution in kind, as due to and falling upon a particular offence in kind, committed by such of these guests, as besides rejecting the invitation of the master, had abused and murdered his messengers. In this respect also, the latter parable is more circumstantial than the former,

in reference to a common subject—the history of the first order of guests, and whatsoever is properly connected with the circumstances of the mission to them. Besides which, the former parable has two missions to as many different orders of guests opposed to the first; the latter has but one, which under the circumstances of the case must answer to the two in the former, and the one order of guests, substituted for the first, in the present parable, must comprehend both the second and the third, substituted for them in the former.

But the principal and most characteristic distinction between the two parables, is this; that the thread of the narrative was broken off, in the parable of the supper, at that point of time in the œconomy of the process for the collection of supplementary guests, when the command to bring in the guests of the third order had just been given, but not yet executed. The narrative specified the fact of this command, which could leave no doubt that it was issued; but it did not specify its fulfilment, as it had specified the performance of the command immediately before it; much less did it pass to the account of any thing posterior to that fulfilment, yet prior to the commencement of the feast, and as necessarily supposing the provision of guests to be over, as the celebration of the entertainment in their company, to be yet to come. Now the parable of the wedding-garment passes beyond this point, and not only certifies the fact of the preliminary collection of guests in sufficient numbers for the celebration of the feast to have begun, but proceeds to the details of a part of the transaction, which was as necessarily consequent on the one, as antecedent to

the other; the review and inspection of the numbers assembled, in the general capacity of guests invited, before any could sit down to the feast in the particular capacity of guests admitted.

Allowing, then, that the moral design and purpose of the former parable might be something as integral, and capable of standing by itself, as that of the latter—allowing too, that so far as they agree, the import of both must be something the same; still if we compare them together, and consider them subservient to one and the same œconomy of the original conception, the intermediate process, and the final execution of a certain projected festivity, whether that of a supper in general, or of a wedding in particular—we may justly contend there is an excess on the one hand, and a defect on the other, in the course and progress of this œconomy towards the same conclusion; the event, which must be supposed the result of all in both, is brought nearer to the point of its consummation in the latter parable, than in the former. The action of both may begin at the same point of time, and for a while may go on in conjunction; but it does not end at the same point of time, and much is seen to be transacted in the one, in the proper course and continuation of its particulars, after the train of proceedings has been brought to a close in the other. The latter parable, therefore, incorporates the moral of the former, with something superadded of its own. It is built on a similar foundation, and composed of similar materials; but the groundwork of the foundation is extended, and the superstructure is proportionably enlarged. If the former parable was deficient in any respect, the latter would so far render it com-

plete ; if the former was entire, as referred to its proper use, the latter adopts it, and makes it subservient to some more comprehensive purpose ; if the former had stopped short of the point to which it might previously have been tending, the latter takes it up again, and carries it forward to the desired result.

It was shewn, as the result of a general induction, founded upon the comparison of a variety of particular passages of scripture, that the principal image which entered into the constitution of that parable, the idea of the supper, was the parabolic or metaphorical mode of expressing that state of beatitude, that exaltation, felicity, and enjoyment, of whatever kind, which may be expected to ensue at the close of the œconomy of probation, (such as we described elsewhere,) and to carry into effect the final dispensations of that œconomy of retribution, which must sometime succeed upon itⁱ. To the propriety of such an image, as used in such a sense, it can make no difference whether the state in question be represented by the figure of a supper, or by that of a wedding-feast ; both being considered as species of entertainments in general, agreeing in these two properties of their common nature, that each is the last, and each is the most considerable and important event, of any such kind as the celebration of a festive entertainment, which could be supposed to take place in the course of one and the same day. But, as designed to express, in the most significant manner, not only the time, but the nature, of that reward, which may be expected at the

ⁱ Vide vol. i. chap. 9. p. 105.

close of the œconomy of the probation of the visible church, as the proper recompense of all the good and faithful who have from time to time constituted the members of its congregation, during its existence in that state ; and, more especially, in conformity to the language of parable, and scriptural allegory in general, which describes the final union between Christ and the members of the invisible church, which will then take the place of the visible—by the celebration of the marriage contract between parties long espoused, but not yet united to each other ; the joy and festivity of a wedding in particular, are upon every account more expressive of the truth, and more in unison with the established language of scripture metaphor on this subject, than the same characteristic properties of a supper, however great or magnificent, in general.

The wedding in the parable, then, is the mystical union of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his character of the spiritual bridegroom, with his invisible church, in her reciprocal character of the spiritual bride ; whensoever that is to take place. The king, in his relation of father to the son whose wedding the feast commemorates, is the first Person in the most Holy Trinity ; the son, who is the bridegroom of that nuptial feast, referred to the father, is Christ in his Divine capacity—referred to the feast, is Christ in his human capacity, as the Lord of his spouse, the church. The privilege of guests at that feast, is the privilege of belonging to the true and invisible church, when the union between Christ and it shall be complete ; with the consequences of that relation to its members, whatsoever they may be. The promulgation of the invitation to this feast,

which precedes its celebration by a longer or a shorter time, is the communication of the privilege of belonging to the visible church, at all periods of its state of probation, among the Jews first, and among Christians afterwards. The relation of a guest invited, acquired by the acceptance of the invitation beforehand, is the relation of a member of the visible church ; the relation of a guest admitted, acquired by partaking in the feast at last, is the relation of a member of the invisible church, or that of a member of the visible in the enjoyment of his final reward. The entire assemblage of the guests invited, is the entire congregation of the visible church ; and the resulting number of guests admitted, is the entire congregation of the invisible. The guests of the first order are they to whom the offer of the privilege entailed upon the relation of a member of the visible church, in the order of time was first made ; the guests of the second, are they to whom, upon the failure of the offer with the former, it was next transferred ; and that privilege being the continued relation of a member of the invisible church, when finally united to its proper Lord and Head, at the close of the period of the probation of the visible church—the offer of that privilege is virtually the offer of Christianity ; the guests by whom it was rejected are the Jews ; and those to whom it was transferred, are the Gentiles. The agents by whose means the offer of the invitation was promulgated, are the proper ministers by whose instrumentality either Jews or Gentiles were brought, or attempted to be brought, to Christ, and by their conversion made members of his church on earth. The review of the assemblage of guests when complete, and the separation of one

part from another, which distinguishes the guest invited, from the guest admitted, to the feast, is the process of judgment, which, before the transition of the visible into the invisible church, will separate from all who were members of the former in general, those who are destined to be the members of the latter in particular. The wedding-garment which distinguishes the one class of these guests, and its members, from those of the other, is that personal criterion, whatsoever it may be, which will discriminate hereafter the member of the future and invisible, from the member of the present and visible church. The ministers who execute the sentence of exclusion on the reprobate guest; the outer darkness into which he is thrust; and every other circumstance of the parabolic allegory, have all their appropriate meaning, deducible from the above principles of explanation; which will appear hereafter.

The moral of the parable, therefore, considered as twofold, and bearing an equal relation to both the parts of a double œconomy of things still future, is this; first, from the rejection of the offer of Christianity by the Jews, to predict the fact, and to elucidate the grounds, of the transition of the distinction of being the members of the visible church, with every privilege present or to come, belonging to that relation, irrecoverably from the Jews, and so far exclusively to the Gentiles; and, secondly, by implying the separation of merely nominal or professing members of the visible church, from the real, before its transition into the invisible, to shew the futurity, and to illustrate the grounds, of that personal distinction even among the Gentiles themselves, considered as successors to the Jews in the

relation and privileges of the members of the visible church—which must yet be made, before any who have been members of the visible, during its state of probation, can become members of the invisible, resulting out of it, at the close of that state, and prior to the consummation of all things.

THE INTERPRETATION.

It is with reason that the relative character of the principal personage, in the parabolic narrative, is set forth in one point of view as a king, and in another, as the author of an entertainment of a certain kind; and the corresponding character of the subordinate personages, is described, in reference to the former, as that of his subjects, in reference to the latter, as that of his guests: for the principal personage in the parable is now perceived to be the Lord of heaven and earth; the entertainment in question, to be that state of reward and felicity which he has prepared for the faith and obedience of the members of his true church; and the subordinate personages in the parable, to be that portion of his moral and responsible creatures on earth, whom he designs to partake thereof.

It is with reason, too, that the entertainment of which he is the author, is represented as a feast which commemorates the marriage of his son: for that marriage is the mystical union of the Lord of the church with true and faithful believers, the members thereof; and the festivity which commemorates that marriage is the joy and felicity, of whatever kind and in whatever state of being, which will be the consequence of that union, to all the

members of the true church, and will constitute the personal reward and personal happiness of each.

The design of such an entertainment could not but be prior to its execution, and the preparations for such a festivity, by a greater or a shorter interval, could not but precede its celebration: as the purpose of the Father for the glory of his Son, and for the reward of the faith and obedience of the members of his true church, in that state of retribution hereafter which will succeed to their previous state of probation in the present life, though conceived from all eternity, must yet be carried into effect only in time; and must require the previous continued existence of the visible church, in its present state of probation, for its appointed period of being. The image of a supper, then, in general is a significant emblem for the last event in the order of the Divine œconomy, from the first conception to the final consummation of this purpose; and the image of a marriage supper in particular, especially of the marriage supper of a king's son, (as the liveliest expression of extraordinary pomp and magnificence, of unbounded festivity, and of universal sympathy and rejoicing, connected with such an occasion,) is still more significant of that happy consummation, in which the good and faithful of every age and nation, from the beginning to the end of the existence of the visible church, are destined to partake, and to find their individual reward and their plenary personal gratification, upon the transition of the visible into the invisible church.

The privilege of standing in the relation of guests

at such an entertainment as this, is consequently the greatest privilege which could be offered to the choice of moral and responsible creatures ; and the alienation of that privilege is the greatest misfortune which could possibly befall the subjects of such a dispensation : for it is nothing less on the one hand, than the offer of the gift of immortality and happiness, and nothing less on the other, than the loss of the same, to the proper subjects of either dispensation. The offer of the privilege of becoming guests at his own entertainment, to whomsoever made, must be the act of the king ; and the offer of the inestimable blessings entailed upon the privilege of standing in the relation of the members of his church, to whomsoever it might be made, must be the act of the author and founder of the church. The promulgation of the invitation beforehand, was the first step towards the celebration of the feast ; and the formation of the visible church, to fulfil a certain purpose, and to go through a certain state of being, beforehand, was the first step towards its transition into the invisible, and the consummation of the happiness reserved for its members, by that event. Two orders, but only two orders, of guests were successively provided for the future feast—one before a certain time, the other, after it ; and the visible church, from the first moment of its foundation to undergo its preliminary probation, before its transition into the invisible, has had two, but only two states of being, the interval between which was of a marked and determinate nature, and during the first of which the congregation composing its members, consisted of one class or division of mankind, and during the second has con-

sisted of another, and a very different one. The members of the first order of guests might be comparatively fewer than those of the last; and the congregation of the visible church for the first of its two states of being, was confined to a single nation, for the second has been such, as to include the greater part of mankind. The character of the guests of each order in relation to the feast, was that of the guests invited, not of the guests admitted to the feast; and the character even of the destined heirs of immortality, at every period of the existence of the visible church, is still that of the members of the visible, but not yet of the invisible church. The character of a guest invited might be lost, and never be consummated in that of a guest admitted to the feast; and the presumptive relation even of an heir of immortality and happiness, acquired by belonging to the visible church, may be lost before the transition of the visible into the invisible; and the relation of a member of the visible in a particular instance, may never be consummated in that of a member of the invisible.

The first body of guests had already been provided for the future feast, before the action in the parable began; and the Jews were already in possession of the visible church, and presumptively heirs to all the privileges of that possession, before the same point of time in their history, and that of the visible church. The choice of these guests beforehand was implied to be due to some supposed worthiness or fitness of character, qualifying them in particular for the enjoyment of such a privilege, and justifying the reasonable expectation that they

would not be found unworthy of it at last ; and the Jews were selected to be the people of God, and placed in possession of his church upon earth, because they were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and might be presumed to be the heirs also of the faith and obedience of those patriarchs, which recommended them to the Divine approbation and selection, as the exclusive depositaries of illustrious privileges, present or to come, and as the appointed vehicles in the transmission of them to future generations.

The acceptance of an invitation given before the time, laid those who had received it under a specific obligation to attend at the time of the feast ; and the original selection of the Jews to be the people of God, the possessors and congregation of his church, for the time being, on earth, was founded on a mutual covenant between God and themselves, which bound them to the performance of every thing which God might require from them *in* that relation, and as a necessary consequence of it : and among the consequences of this relation none could be so natural and so necessary as this, that they who were already the people of God, and the congregation of the visible church, while its limits were confined to a single community, should yet endeavour to preserve that relation, and do all that depended upon themselves to that effect—though others besides them, might become his people also, and the pale of the church might be enlarged, to comprehend the rest of mankind, as well as them.

There was an interval of greater or less duration

between the time of the first promulgation, and first acceptance, of the invitation to the future feast, and the time of the mission of the servants of the king at a certain period in the œconomy of the preparations for its celebration ; and there was an interval of equally definite and ascertainable length, (as was shewn in the consideration of the last parable,) between the first establishment of the church on earth, by the choice of the Jews as the people of God, and by their settlement in Canaan in that capacity, and that period in the subsequent history of the œconomy of this church, which was marked and defined by the appearance of the first of the prophets of the ancient dispensation. The object of the mission of these servants at the time in question, was to remind the guests before invited, of their existing engagement, and to announce to them that the time of fulfilling it was come : and the object of the ministry of the prophets, was to remind the Jews of their original covenant, to reinforce its existing obligations, and, above all things, to act as the precursors of the Messiah—by holding out new terms of acceptance, inculcating the efficacy of repentance, and assimilating the genius of the law long before, to the spirit of Christianity, afterwards to be revealed. The mission of the servants then, for the first time, to the guests, was a cardinal point in the œconomy of the preparations for the celebration of the feast ; and the institution of the order of the prophets, was a cardinal point in the œconomy of the visible church, in its progress to the end and design of its being, through the several stages of its existence among the Jews first, and among Christians afterwards^k.

^k The difficulty which might be raised, at this particular pe-

The mission of the first class of servants failed of its object with respect to the guests ; and the mission of the prophets, as was shewn more at large in treating of the last parable, failed of its object with respect to the Jews. Yet the failure of this first mission was not considered final, for it was followed by a second ; and though the ministry of the prophets of the old dispensation, in their order of time, had failed of its proper object with respect to the Jews, yet the ministry of the prophets, for the attainment of that purpose, was succeeded in due time by that of the apostles. The good-will of the

riod in the interpretation of the parable, from supposing the first order of messengers there alluded to, to be the order of the prophets among the Jews, and the time of their mission to coincide with the period fixed for the celebration of the feast, though the dispensation of the Gospel itself, strictly speaking, could not be said yet to have begun ; would not be peculiar to the present parable, but would apply with equal force to the parable of the great supper. The proper solution of this difficulty, in reference to that parable, was pointed out vol. iii. p. 491, and it is equally suitable to explain it at present. Taking that explanation along with him, the reader will readily perceive and admit, that the first promulgation of Judaism was virtually the promulgation of Christianity, and the first promulgation of either was virtually the consummation of both ; that the visible church, under all the forms and circumstances of its existence at different times, has always been one and the same—and even as established in Judæa, and confined to the Jews, it is not to be distinguished from the same church as extending over all the earth, and comprehending the rest of mankind ; and as its first foundation among the Jews, so every subsequent change or modification in its construction, while still confined to them, was preliminary to the same result ; and the nearer it brought the character of Judaism for the time, to the character of the Gospel—so much the more completely was it the anticipation of the same church, as hereafter to exist among Christians.

king towards the first order of guests, and his reluctance to dispossess them of a privilege which he had always intended for them, and had virtually bestowed on them already, was shewn by the renewal of his overture to them, notwithstanding their refusal of it once; and the continued regard of God for his ancient people, and his desire to preserve them in the possession of their peculiar relation to himself, and to his church on earth, notwithstanding all they had done to forfeit his favour, and the rejection of his offers of pardon and peace, made them, in time past, by the prophets—were displayed in the offer of Christianity first of all to them—the acceptance of which would have produced this effect, and kept the Jews in possession of their ancient privileges. Yet the failure of the first mission of the servants prepared the way for the failure of the second; and the same people, who had neither duly observed the conditions of their original covenant, nor been converted by the preaching of the prophets, were not likely, perhaps, to listen to the apostles.

It appeared to be implied that the servants who came upon the second mission, though standing in the same relation to the master of the household, and having the same office to discharge in respect to his guests, as the former—were persons of greater dignity and superior authority, than they: and though the messengers of the first class should denote the prophets, and those of the second, the apostles—and though the office both of the prophets and of the apostles, in fulfilling the purposes of God with respect to the œconomy of his church upon earth, should be allowed to be the same; yet our

Saviour has assured us that the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than the chief of the prophets¹; the humblest instrument in the dispensation of the Gospel, served an office which rendered him more illustrious than the greatest of the ministers in the proper dispensation of the Law. The personal relation of the apostles to Jesus Christ, the office which they fulfilled, and the character which they represented, in founding, governing, and providing for the continuance of the Christian church; the demonstrations of power and cooperation from on high, which accompanied them, wheresoever they went; the supernatural gifts so plentifully bestowed upon them, for their own share of the work of their ministry, and as freely communicated by them to others—tongues, miracles of every kind and degree—prophesy, revelations, inspired eloquence, the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom—these were the credentials of a Christian Evangelist, at the outset of the work of preaching the Gospel—which attested the divinity of his commission, and gave him a dignity and authority, taken altogether unexampled and unprecedented, in any other instance of like kind, before.

The argument on which these messengers were instructed to insist, in addition to the weight of their character and personal influence, was derived specially from the kind intentions of the king, as the author of the feast, towards those whom he was inviting as his guests; a kindness of intention declared by the splendour, the amplitude, the suffi-

¹ Matt. xi. 11 : Luke vii. 28. Vide my Dissertations, vol. ii. Diss. v. 164.

ciency of his preparations for their reception and entertainment, now first plainly and explicitly set forth to them : and in like manner, the eminent good-will of God to his ancient people, the magnitude and value of the privileges to which they would have become entitled by continuing in that relation, could not be fully understood, nor duly appreciated, until the true nature of the legal dispensation, though always typical of the Christian, had been declared and revealed by the open publication of the Gospel. The substantial graces of the one, which answer to the typical blessings of the other ; the shadowy outline of the law filled up in the body of Gospel truth ; eternal life in lieu of temporal promises ; spiritual privileges instead of carnal distinctions ; fulness of light, and plenitude of knowledge, for indistinctness of vision, and imperfect apprehensions of duty ; emancipation from the yoke of bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God ; the Spirit of adoption, for the temper of the alien ; filial confidence for slavish dread ; Christ the plenary absolution from the curse of the law ; reconciliation to God, and peace to the wounded conscience, relieved from the apprehension of wrath to come ; a never-failing ground of righteousness in the imputed merits of a crucified Saviour ; the sanctifying graces and aids of the Spirit ; the fruits of joy and peace in believing ; the assurance of a resurrection to come ; the prospect of immortality, and of a vast and inexhaustible fund of happiness, an exceeding and everlasting weight of glory, beyond the limits of the present life ; these, and much more than these, though all involved in the relation of a member of the visible church on earth, and all embodied more

or less in the privileges of the elder dispensation, were first fully brought to light, and experimentally made known, by the preaching and promulgation of the Gospel; until which time, neither the good-will of God towards mankind, nor the inestimable distinction conferred upon the Jew, in offering the Gospel first to him, and for a time to none besides, could be duly comprehended, or duly appreciated.

The causes, which led to the failure of the second mission with the persons who had rejected the first overture to the same effect, so far as they agreed with what was assigned in the parable of the supper to account for the same effect, have been anticipated and explained in reference to that parable. But besides the simple rejection of the offer of the king, as produced by such causes; besides the general indifference to the honour which he designed them, and the general unwillingness to postpone any engagement of their own, whether of business or of pleasure, for the sake of keeping their word with him, which characterised the conduct of a part of the guests—the rest were represented as instigated by a much worse motive, an absolute dislike of his offer, and a personal hatred of the quarter whence it came; which not only led to its rejection, but to the abuse and ill-treatment, the persecution and murder, of the messengers by whom it was made. That fact, in the history of the overture of the Gospel to the Jews, which answers to this representation, is not only the simple rejection of Christianity, but the hatred of the religion, the personal hostility to its founder, and the systematic ill-usage of his followers, which accompanied that rejection; instigated by which

feelings the Jews were not content merely to persist in infidelity themselves, but resented every attempt at their conversion, as a personal injury; they were not satisfied to reject Christianity in their own persons, but did the utmost in their power to prevent its reception by any others.

The penal consequences of the failure of this second overture to the same order of guests, considered as final and decisive, were twofold; the alienation of the privilege intended for all, from that time forward, from all, and the addition of a special punishment upon that part of them who had been guilty of a further and a special offence. The former was no more than deserved by the order in common, because all had rejected the invitation in common; the latter was properly due to those, who, besides rejecting the overture, had put the bearers of it to death. In like manner, as a common punishment for the common sin of their infidelity, the whole nation of the Jews, from that time to this, have been involved in one sentence of rejection as the people of God; but the punishment of the sin of blood-guiltiness in kind, fell upon the heads of the generation who crucified our Lord, and not only rejected the offer of Christianity, but persecuted its preachers to the death.

This special punishment consisted in two things, the destruction of the murderers first, and the burning up of their city next; and the calamities of the Jews in general, and the fate of Jerusalem in particular, during the continuance of the days of vengeance, were analogous to this distinction; the slaughter of the people by the sword both else-

where, and in Jerusalem itself, having gone on at all periods of the war before, the demolition of the city and the temple being the last event, the catastrophe and conclusion of the whole. The agents in the infliction of his vengeance were the armies of the king; and the instruments in the destruction of the Jews, and of Jerusalem, were the armies of Rome. Those armies were sent forth, not conducted, by the king; and the armies of Rome, though doubtless the ministers of vengeance on the infidel Jews, were still only unconscious instruments in the hands of the Divine providence, for the consummation of its own purposes^m. Referred to the quarter, whence these armies were supposed to be sent, the murderers in question, though subjects of the king, dwelt by themselves, in a city or a country of their own; and so did the Jews, and more especially the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with respect to the quarter whence the ministers of Divine vengeance were ultimately to be dispatched against them, the seat of the imperial government at Rome.

The offer of the king's invitation to the second order of guests was the necessary consequence of its rejection by the first; and the offer of the Gospel to the Gentiles, entailing the present relation of members of the church on earth, and the reversion-

^m These armies are called in the parable *the armies of the king*, for the same reason that, in the prophecy of the seventy weeks, the armies of desolation, which mean the same thing, and whose ministry was to be just as instrumental in executing the dispensation there predicted, are called *the people of the prince* that should come; that is, the armies of Messiah the prince; Dan. ix. 25, 26.

ary enjoyment of all the privileges attached to that relation in the church in heaven, was a necessary effect, humanly speaking, of its rejection by the Jews. The choice of this second order of guests could be determined by no such regard to personal fitness, as that of the guests of the first ; and if the Jews were selected originally to be the people of God, because they were the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and therefore presumptively the natural inheritors of their faith ; the Gentiles could be substituted in their stead, in the same relation, from no such motive as that. To whatever degree too, the peculiarity of his relation bound the Jew, or qualified the Jew, beforehand, to embrace the offer of Christianity when made to him—to the same degree the Gentile, in consequence of the want of that relation, would neither be bound by the same obligation, nor predisposed by the same qualification, to act accordingly in the acceptance of the same offer. Yet the hereditary prerogative of the Jew was not sufficient to perpetuate his ancient relation, by preventing his rejection of Christianity ; and the natural disqualification of the Gentile was no obstacle to his acquisition of a new spiritual character, by his acceptance of the Gospel.

The invitation transferred to the guests of the second order, was to all intents the same which had been offered to those of the first ; and the servants acted as much by the command of their master in transferring it to the former, as in taking it away from the latter ; nor was the offer of the Gospel, as made to the Gentiles, a different thing, either in the present effect, or in the future consequences, of its acceptance, from the same offer as made to the

Jews ; nor in the business of propagating Christianity, did its emissaries do any thing of their own accord, or on their own responsibility ; much less, without a special direction from above, and a special sanction of their act, did they undertake to alienate the character and relation of the people of God, from their former possessors, the Jews, and to transfer them to those, who before were destitute of them, the Gentiles.

The first offer of this invitation to a new order of guests, might follow directly on its final rejection by the old ; and the process of the œconomy in the transfer of that offer to the new order, might be going on simultaneously with the dispensation for the infliction of punishment upon part of the guests of the old ; but the full effect of the alienation of their original privilege from its first possessors to a new order of persons, could not be considered complete, until the destruction of the murderers of the servants of the king, and the burning up of their city, were both over also : and in like manner, though the call of the Gentiles, and so far the first step towards the substitution of a new people in the relation of the church of God, did certainly precede the beginning of the days of vengeance upon the Jews ; yet the rejection of the Jews, as once the people of God, could not be said to be complete, until after the consummation of that vengeance itself. Before the destruction of the temple, and the dispersion of the nation, the dissolution of their civil and religious polity had not altogether taken place ; nor before that total dissolution, could their peculiar character, as the possessors of the church of God,

for the time being, originally planted among them, and still continuing to subsist in Judæa in a definite form and shape, be said to have been altogether lost. The temple and the temple service, the Law and the Levitical code, had still a being, and were still capable of some observance, as before; and while that was the case, the form and outline of the ancient religious polity, and so far the accidents and exterior of the visible church, once planted among the Jews, might still be seen; though like a body grown old and decayed, its primitive strength, and youthful beauty, were long since gone, the last vestiges of life and breath were fast disappearing within it, and nothing but the shadow of what it once had been, seemed to be left. But after the destruction of Jerusalem, even the traces of decay, and the symptoms of a body fast verging towards its dissolution, were no longer visible. Every fragment of a preexisting substance, every indication of former life and being had disappeared, and the very dust of the mouldering carcass was no where to be seen. The church of God in the possession of its natural integrity and perfection, existed only among the Gentiles.

The quarters into which the servants were dispatched in search of the new order of guests, were the outlets and passages of the roads leading in all directions, as referred to the locality from which they were supposed to be sent, viz. the residence of the king, and the place where the wedding-feast was designed to be celebrated; and the quarters into which the emissaries of Christianity went forth upon their errand, to transfer the offer of the Gospel from the

Jews to the Gentiles, were the various regions and communities of the ancient world, in every direction round about Judæa, the birth-place of the Gospel. As all these quarters were explored in search of guests; so was the Gospel preached in all those countries, and churches planted in all those communities: and as the search, after the new order of guests, once begun, was going on in all those quarters at once; so was the preaching of the Gospel, once thrown open to the Gentiles, going on in all countries and among all communities of the ancient world, at once. As all who were found in those quarters, by the servants, were brought in alike as guests; so was the offer of the Gospel to the Gentiles, indiscriminately made to all. The offer of the invitation which had been rejected by the guests of the first order, succeeded with those of the second; and the preaching of the Gospel which had failed so generally with the Jews, succeeded as generally with the Gentiles.

All the guests of this description, wheresoever they were found, and whensoever they were brought in, yet constituted together, when collected, but one class or order, agreeing in the possession of a common character, that of the guests assembled against the feast; and all the churches of the Gentiles, wheresoever and whensoever planted in particular communities, yet form altogether one and the same visible or catholic church, the congregation of which is the aggregate of the congregations of each particular church, and the members of which in the complex comprehend the members of the future or invisible church. The personal character of the guests, before

and after they were brought in, was discriminated asunder by no other differences, than that of the good and the bad in general; and neither is the personal character of moral agents, whether before they become the members of the visible church, or after, discriminated by any other distinctions. The designation of good did not apply to all the guests in the complex, nor that of bad; but partly the one and partly the other: and as neither moral agents in general, so neither the members of the visible church in particular, are all good or all bad, all real, or all nominal; but a mixture of both. Under the common name of good in the complex of guests, might be included all degrees of goodness above a certain standard; and under the common name of bad, all degrees of a contrary quality, below the same: and the name of the real, among the members of the visible church, may include all degrees of Christian perfection above a certain point of excellence, and the name of the nominal, all opposite degrees of imperfection, below the same. A certain measure of positive excellence may be necessary to constitute Christian goodness, in every instance, and a certain measure of positive depravity to constitute its opposite, badness, in the abstract—but the possible degrees of attainment above the one, or of descent below the other, can no more be uniform in the case of Christians, or members of the visible church, than in that of moral agents in general.

The search after the new order of guests, once begun, was continued, until the wedding was replenished, that is, a sufficient number of guests had been collected, for the celebration of the festivity to

begin, or at least to be no longer delayed, in consequence of the defect of partakers in it; an effect, which under the circumstances of the case, could not fail to be produced in the course of time: and the propagation of the Gospel among the Gentiles having once begun, that is, the visible church having once been planted in all the earth, it must continue to be propagated and professed, until there shall be no occasion for its propagation and profession any longer; the pale of the church must be enlarged, until it acquires that degree of extension which is necessary to the end of its being; fresh accessions must be made to its congregation, until as many shall have been from time to time members of the visible church, in its state of probation on earth, as the providence of God may design to be members of the invisible, in its state of triumphant exaltation in another life. And however distant the period of such a consummation may be, yet if the number of the elect be but finite, it cannot fail to be accomplished at last.

The collection of a sufficient number of guests, was not followed by the immediate celebration of the feast, but by a previous review of the guests; nor will the accomplishment of the number of the elect themselves, and so far the conclusion of the œconomy of the probation of the visible church, be followed immediately by the commencement of the state of retribution, but by an intermediate process of judgment. The person, who held the review, was the king, in his quality of the author and provider of the feast; and the subjects of the review were the assembled company, in their capacity of the guests whom he had invited to it: and the judg-

ment which will precede the transition of the visible into the invisible church, will be conducted by the head of the church, who stands in a common relation to both, as the head of the one, in its state of probation, and that of the other, in its state of exaltation; and the subjects of this judgment will be the members of his visible church. The review of the assembled company was either directed to a personal object, or followed by a personal effect, as concerned the guests; viz. that of discriminating a part of the company—all standing beforehand in the common capacity of guests invited—from another; the part which required to be admitted, from that which required to be denied admission, to the ultimate enjoyment of the feast: and the judgment of the members of his visible church, by its head, at the close of the œconomy of their probation, will produce the same personal effect upon them, in separating a part from the rest; the members or congregation of the resulting and invisible church, from the members or complex of the preexisting and visible church.

The test which distinguished the guest who had been simply invited, from the guest who was ultimately admitted, to the enjoyment of the feast, was the absence of a garment proper for the occasion, in the one instance, and its presence, in the other: and the test which must discriminate the future member of the invisible church, from the present member of the visible, must be that qualification, whatever it be, which ought to be the characteristic of the professed member of the visible church, at all times of its present existence in its preparatory state of probation, and cannot fail to be the distinguishing attri-

bute and quality of the member of the invisible, in its resulting state of retribution. Nor, without stopping to insist on the general conformity which is bound to subsist between the lives and professions of all the members of a society like that of the visible church—if we consider that the qualification of the guest in the parable is the possession of a dress proper for the occasion—and that occasion is the marriage feast of the king's son—the meaning of which figure, when translated into strict propriety of speech, is the consummation of the mystical union between Christ, as the Head of the church, and true believers, as the members of the same; we shall not err in concluding that this *one* qualification, denoted by the wedding-garment, must be the mystical bond of union which attaches the members to the Head of his body, the church—the faith of the true believer in his Lord and Master, Christ. This proper garment was to be furnished indeed from the vestry of the king, but its assumption depended on the guests themselves; and even faith, though the one thing necessary to salvation, and in its imputed efficacy, singly sufficient for that purpose, is not independent of the freewill and cooperation of the believer, no more than of the grace of God. It may be the proper spiritual covering of the soul, and neither of mortal texture, nor of human acquisition, but immediately derived from the wardrobes of heaven; and yet it must be received, and put on, by the wearer for himself. The virtue of the marriage-garment in the parable was such, that no antecedent worthiness of the guest invited, without it, could entitle him to a place as a guest admitted to that feast; and with it no antecedent unfitness availed to exclude him from

it: and it is of the essence of the Christian qualification of a saving faith, to level all distinctions of character in other respects, to compensate for all other deficiencies in particular instances, and to entitle every one who is allowed the benefit of it, to the same kind and degree of acceptance, on the same grounds of imputed righteousness and good desert. Without it, no previous excellence of man's own acquisition can avail to salvation, and with it, no moral defect, under which the subject himself might previously labour, presents any obstacle to his forgiveness, and his acceptance with God. This garment was the same in every guest, admitted, by its means, to the feast: and the qualification of a saving faith is one and the same, in the principle from which it springs, in the effect which it produces, and in the object of trust, on which it is placed—in every member of the visible church, who becomes entitled thereby to the relation of a member of the invisible. It is grounded in an equal reliance on the merits of their Saviour, in all; and it produces a common effect, their common acceptance and salvation, by virtue of a common imputed righteousness, in all. All among the guests assembled, who were admitted to the feast, were admitted because they possessed this garment; and all who were excluded from it, were excluded because they possessed it not: and among the complex of the members of the visible church, none will be saved who do not possess the personal quality of a saving faith, and none will be condemned, who do not want it. It is the only criterion between the nominal and the real Christian, considered as equally members of the same visible church here, which by its effects on their lives and

actions, as it is present or absent, separates them one from another in this life, and at the day of judgment, when their lives and their actions will be inquired into, and measured by the standard of their duties and their professions—it is the only thing which by virtue of its presence or of its absence, will determine their respective conditions through all eternity.

The Book of Revelation, which in the scope of its delineations of the future, has comprehended the consummation of all things, and the celebration of the nuptial solemnities of the Lamb and his true church, had in view such a marriage vesture as this, when it described the new Jerusalem, the emblem of that church, in the act of descending from heaven as the spouse of the Lamb, clothed in a linen garment, white and fine; which it interpreted to mean the “justifications” of the saintsⁿ. It had the same idea in view, when it represented the Lamb, going forth from heaven as a conqueror, followed by armies clothed in white robes^o; and again, when it described the innumerable company of all saints, clothed in white robes, and with palms in their hands^p; and again, when it spake of those, who had washed their clothes, and made them white and clean in the blood of the Lamb^q. Under each of these images, one and the same idea is meant to be expressed, that of a lively faith and trust in Christ, as the one thing needful to salvation. This is the imputed righteousness, and consequent perfection of the saints, which clothes and adorns the mystical bride. This is the uniform of the heavenly legions, which discriminates the soldiers of Christ, from the fol-

ⁿ Rev. xix. 8.

^o Chap. xix. 11—14.

^p Chap. vii. 9.

^q Chap. vii. 14.

lowers and retainers of darkness ; and qualifies them to fight the good fight under the banners of the Lamb. This is that presence vesture, which ushers the saints to the throne of grace, and renders them meet to stand before the Majesty of heaven. This is that true laver, and source of purity, which more effectual than the fuller's earth, or the refiner's fire, purges away every stain of mortal frailty, and instead of the natural nakedness, and ingrained impurity of the human soul, invests it with a robe of glory—as characteristic of its innocence, whiter than the snows of Salmon—as the badge of its acceptance, and as the emblem of its exaltation, richer than the purples of Tyre and Sidon.

In almost every language, the permanent qualities, the habitudes, and dispositions of the moral or the intellectual part of human nature—are expressed by terms which either generally or specially understood—would imply them to be the garb or vesture of their proper subjects, as much as the dress or clothing, in the ordinary sense of the word, is of the body. We need not wonder then, that the wedding-garment in the parable is employed as the image to characterise that qualification of the true Christian's soul, which is the permanent principle, resident within him ; which by influencing the whole tenor of his life and conversation, discriminates even now the heir of salvation, and the future member of the invisible church, from the mere nominal professor of the name of Christ ; which even now mystically unites him to the whole body of the faithful, in the same communion of faith and love, under one object of each ; and will hereafter make him one both with the Head of this body, and with his fellow-members

thereof, after a manner at present inexplicable, and perhaps inconceivable.

Under these circumstances, it seems only a necessary inference, that the case of the individual guest, who was found destitute of this particular qualification for admission to the feast, and whom we concluded to be the representative of a class—was intended to apply to the case of all those among professing believers—who notwithstanding that there is no other name given under heaven, whereby men can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ; nor any means of admission to the marriage feast of the Lamb, without the marriage garment proper for such an occasion—yet purposely neglect, or wilfully overlook this only method of salvation; foolishly hoping, or presumptuously trusting, that they shall still be entitled to acceptance for the sake of some merit of their own, independent of faith in a crucified Saviour. For the offence of this guest was due to no unavoidable necessity, no venial imprudence, no excusable oversight, which might have defended, or palliated it. It was no sin of ignorance or of omission; but a wilful act of commission. He knew that he was expected to appear in such a garment, and yet he had ventured into the guest-chamber without one: he knew it to be necessary in every other instance, and yet he had imagined it would be overlooked in his own: it had no doubt been offered to him, as well as to the rest, yet he had declined to receive it—as if superfluous—or to wear it, as not indispensable. All this seems to point, in the class of guests of which he is the representative, to that portion of the members of the visible church, who, however distinguished in other respects, yet

agree in this, that they do not choose to be saved after the manner of God's appointment, but will still be trusting to some device or imagination of their own, as just as effectual for the same purpose, and just as likely to succeed.

The ministers or attendants, whose instrumentality was alluded to, in executing the sentence of exclusion upon the reprobate guest; who were seen to be distinct from the servants employed in the collection of guests, yet to discharge an office closely connected with the celebration of the feast; it will now be perceived, must denote the angels; whose personal attendance upon our Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of his return to judgment, is uniformly mentioned in every description of that event, or allusion to it, which occurs in scripture; and whose presence, it is also implied, is not designed to be that of idle spectators, but of those who will have a special part and duty to discharge, in carrying into execution the different personal results of such an œconomy as that of the final judgment, to their different personal subjects.

Lastly, the outer darkness, into which the reprobate guest is described to be ejected, is not more opposed, in its primary sense, to the joy and festivity which must be conceived to reign in the guest-chamber of a banquet, celebrated at night—as contrasted with the darkness, the gloominess, the solitude, and melancholy, which at the same time prevail without its precincts; than it is in its concealed import, to the state of reprobation in which the result of their final trial must leave the merely nominal members of the visible church of Christ—

as compared with their condition, whom the same event will leave in possession of the inestimable privilege of standing in the same relation to the invisible, as before to the visible church, and of partaking in that capacity, of their share in the common happiness of guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb. The weeping and gnashing of teeth, those symptoms of disappointment, rage, or despair, which are supposed to be the personal acts of such as are condemned to that state of exclusion, in contradistinction to those who are permitted to remain in the enjoyment of the festivity within—may be consequently the proper acts of persons in their situation, and naturally to be expected as the first expression of their feelings, under the circumstances of the case ; yet in comparison of the extreme curse and malediction, which we may presume to be destined for those, who labour under the sentence of a perpetual exclusion from the presence of God, and the enjoyment of happiness—even this thrusting into the outer darkness can be but the beginning of sorrow, and the first indications of pain and horror, produced by the consciousness of their situation, can be but the forebodings of wrath to come ; and not more the effect of the absence of present good, than of the anticipation of future evil ^r.

^r If the above explanation of the parable of the wedding-garment is correct, it may justly be regarded as one of the most profound and mystical, which has yet come under our observation. Considered as a prophetic delineation of the future, it is not unmixedly so ; but partly historical, partly prophetic, the historical being subservient to the prophetic part. It is historical, down to the time of the second mission of the servants to the first order of the guests—answering to the mission of the

apostles of Christianity to the Jews ; prophetic thenceforward to the end. As prophetic, it is even now in the course of its fulfilment ; the order to bring in the guests of the second class, having been long since given, indeed, and long since begun to be executed, but not yet being completed. From the first conception to the final consummation of the feast—that is, from the first conception to the final consummation of the scheme of human salvation—the time embraced by it is from an eternity *a parte post*, to an eternity *a parte ante* : for there never was a time when the Christian scheme was not contemplated in the Divine mind, and there never will be a time when the effects of that scheme will cease to be felt.

Though I have made no mention in the preceding exposition, of the millenary dispensation, yet the reader must doubtless be aware, from vol. i. 147. and also from the exposition given of the kindred parable of the great supper, that this is one of the parables, which in the opinion of the author of this work are to be referred to that dispensation, and will find their fulfilment underneath it. With this reference, he will of course understand that the judgment alluded to, as adumbrated by the review of the guests in the parable, is the judgment consequent on the return of our Lord to his personal reign on earth, and the first resurrection ; in the œconomy and effects of which no class of moral and responsible agents will be concerned, but those, who, whether Jews or Gentiles, have been from time to time the members of the visible church, in its state of probation on earth. This circumstance may serve to explain in a manner not yet pointed out, that part of the parable, which supposes the review of the guests to take place in the guest-chamber itself, immediately before they must be conceived to sit down to meat ; for the guest-chamber, on that supposition, may answer to Judæa, just as the nuptial festivity does, to the millenary kingdom established under the Messiah in that country ; and it is an ancient tradition of the church, that Christ will return to judgment to that part of the earth whence he departed at his ascent into heaven. I know not, whether the same circumstance of the millenary kingdom's being to be established in some sense or other, in Judæa, as contradistinguished to the rest of the earth, may not explain the allusion to the outer darkness, in its first and proper sense—after a more obvious and

intelligible manner, than on any other principle. Let it only be supposed at least, that some parts of the earth will be excluded from the limits of Messiah's kingdom, or from the visible enjoyment of his presence; and we assign an outer darkness in opposition to the light within, and a proper state of abode for the reprobates in opposition to the elect, even during the millenary dispensation, and as coincident with it while it lasts. But this is too mysterious a subject, to speak positively upon it.

The stated usage of the language of scriptural allegory, by which the union between Christ and his true church, in the present state of its probation, is so regularly represented as that of parties affianced, but not yet married to each other, and in its future state of retribution, as the connection of the marriage state itself—cannot be traced further back than the Song of Solomon; though the observations of St. Paul, Ephes. v. 22—32, on the mystical import of the rite of marriage, justify the inference that it must have been contemplated and typified under the institution of marriage, from the first.

Though the agency both of the prophets of the old dispensation, and of the apostles of the new, each as standing in the same relation to the master of the feast, and each as discharging the same office to the first order of his guests, denoting the Jews, is so distinctly mentioned in the parable, that of our Lord is not; though he too discharged an office, analogous to that of the prophets before him, and preparatory to that of the apostles after him, for and among the same people, and in the same quality of the servant, apostle, or messenger of his Father. But the propriety of this omission in the present instance is evident; for our Lord himself is that son of the king whose wedding-festivity gives occasion to all that is done in behalf of the guests; this wedding is the union between him and his church; and while the character and relation of the bridegroom in that mystical union, are sustained by Christ, the character and relation of the servants, who take the prominent part in the provision of guests to do honour to the feast, are those of the bridegroom's friend, which might be sustained by the prophets and by the apostles, but could not with propriety be ascribed to the bridegroom himself.

As the two parables which we have just considered, were delivered consecutively; so, if we make allowance for the differ-

ence of the material structure in each, and the adoption of a new species of imagery, to pourtray the same kind of real or substantial truth, the history begun in the one, and carried forwards to a certain point, may be said to be resumed in the other, and prosecuted to a point beyond it; the alienation of the possession of the visible church from the Jews, with the consequent relation of being the people of God, and the translation of both to the Gentiles, for reasons in one of these cases, analogous to the causes which produce the effect in the other, being the common moral of each—but the former parable stopping with the supposed fulfilment of that one effect, the latter passing beyond it to a still more remote effect, to which even that must be supposed subservient.

The latter parable is consequently more comprehensive than the former; the one extending from the beginning to the end of all things, the other only from the beginning to the conclusion of the Mosaic dispensation; the history of the visible church in each state of its being, being the subject of the one, that of the same church, only as established among the Jews, being the subject of the other; the substance of the former parable also, being virtually incorporated in the latter, from the time of the mission of the first class of the servants, to the time of the mission of the second. The latter parable is more sublime and elevated, as well as more comprehensive, than the former; for it combines with what is common to both, a subject of greater dignity *per se*, which did not enter into the former, the ultimate formation of the invisible, out of the preliminary state and constitution of the visible church; and while there is the same propriety in the metaphorical denomination of husbandmen, to describe the relation of the members of the visible church for the time being, especially as confined to the Jews—there is more of dignity, and not less of fitness and decorum, in the metaphorical designation of guests invited to the nuptials of a king's son, to represent those members of the visible church for the time being, at every period of its existence, who are sometime to become the members of the invisible. On all these accounts, the latter parable would necessarily be more mysterious, and therefore more difficult than the former. Nor does it appear, that though those who heard the former at the time, had conceived something like an idea of its drift, the import of the latter was even partially understood by them.

It is peculiar to these two parables, that they were the last which our Lord is known to have addressed to the people at large ; that they were both pronounced on the last day of his public ministry, and that they preceded only by two days his passion itself. It is not improbable, that the near approach of the latter event suggested the idea of the first of the two. The beauty, the pathos, the propriety of the history, pourtrayed in it, are wonderfully enhanced by such a supposition ; nor can we doubt, that whether perceptible to his hearers also or not, the speedy fulfilment, which the part of his narrative relating to the ultimate event of the mission of the son of the owner, was about to experience, must have been present to our Saviour's mind at the time. If his own rejection and personal treatment by the Jews, as last and chief in the succession of the prophets, was on any account the main fact on which the deprivation of their ancient privilege and relation as the people of God, was to depend ; that consideration alone would require such a retrospective survey of their previous history from the first, as the parable presents—in order to shew by what steps the ingratitude, perverseness, and impenitence of the Jews, through a series of trials for their reformation and amendment before, arrived at this worst and most aggravated effect of the same causes, at last ; especially, if the part attributed to the son in the parable is, in all reason, to be understood not only of what our Saviour was to suffer at the hands of the Jews at last, but of all that he had previously done, to prevent that catastrophe—of the whole order, duration, and success of his personal ministry, which had been going on so long before.

With regard to the second parable, also, there is the same general congruity between the nature of the disclosures to which it is subservient, and the circumstances of time and occasion under which it was delivered ; which might so far have contributed to produce this, as well as the preceding. Parts of the parable, considered as prophetic, would receive a speedy fulfilment ; especially in what related to the second mission of the servants to the guests of the first order—and in consequence of the failure of that overture, their mission to the guests of the second—besides what related to the treatment of the servants by the guests in the former instance, and the punishment which on that account would fall upon them. The proper date of the first of these missions was within fifty days after the resurrection, and

the proper date of the second was within eleven years of the same event. (See my *Dissertations*, vol. i. Diss. xiii.)

But with respect to the import of this parable in general, and its adaptation to the time when it was delivered ; if the failure of the Messiah, as a preacher of repentance to the Jews, was to be aggravated by the failure of the apostles, in the same capacity, and the rejection of Jesus Christ was to be made worse by the rejection of his religion—the fittest period for predicting the consequences of both these facts to the Jews themselves, would seem to be when our Lord's own ministry was about to end, and that of the apostles about to begin. So far too as the parable was designed to comprehend the whole scheme of redemption, and to present a simultaneous view of God's dealings with his moral creatures, considered as the members of his visible church, through every state of its existence, from the beginning to the consummation of all things ; such a retrospect might well be taken of so much of this scheme as was already past, and such a prospect exhibited of so much of it as yet remained to be transacted—at the close of our Lord's personal ministry, which was a cardinal point in this wonderful œconomy of providence, before and after. The place of this parable in the series of disclosures relating to the first formation, the intermediate being, and the ultimate destination of the visible church, is analogous to the place of our Lord's personal ministry, in the order of the event ; the one predicting the transition of the Jewish into the Christian church, at the same point of time, at which the other was mediately interposed as instrumental in effecting it. Nor further, if we consider the final issue of things in this allegorical representation of the future ; the consummation of the visible in the invisible church ; the separation of one part of its members from the other, which precedes ; the rule which governs that separation ; the nature of that marriage festivity to which so long a train and series of preparations was necessary to conduct ; the undescribed, and perhaps indescribable, joys which are the privilege and happiness of the guests admitted to that mysterious banquet ; we cannot hesitate to conclude, that as such a representation whensoever made, could not but be worthy of our Lord in general ; so at no period of his personal ministry could it have been made with more evident fitness and propriety, than when his ministry was about to expire, and the visible church, of which

all this was the previous history and the ultimate result, having fulfilled the purpose of its being, while still confined to the Jews, was about to pass into a new state of existence, by being transferred to the Gentiles ; which would bring it so much nearer to the effect of its final destination from the first.

PARABLE TWENTY-SIXTH AND TWENTY-SEVENTH. ALLEGORICAL.

THE TEN VIRGINS AND THE TALENTS.

MATTHEW XXIV. 1—44. MARK XIII. 1—37. LUKE XXI. 5—36.
HARMONY, IV. 78.

MATTHEW xxiv. 1—44.

¹ And Jesus went forth, and was departing from the temple, and his disciples came unto *him*, to shew him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said to them, “See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, Stone upon stone shall not be left here, which shall not be utterly loosed.”

³ And as he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him apart, saying, “Tell us when these things shall be, and what *is* the sign of thy appearing and presence, and of the end of the period of ages.”

⁴ And Jesus answered, and said unto them, “Beware lest any one deceive you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and many they will deceive. ⁶ And ye will be about to hear of wars and rumours of wars: *but* see *to it*, be not alarmed; for they must all come to pass, but the end is not as yet. ⁷ For nation shall be stirred up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there will be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in such and such places; ⁸ and all these things—a beginning of throes.

⁹ “At that time will they deliver you up unto tribulation, and will kill you; and ye will be hated by all the nations for my name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then will many be offended, and will deliver up one another, and hate one another. ¹¹ And

“ many false prophets will arise, and will deceive many : 12 and
 “ because of the multiplying of iniquity, the love of the many
 “ will wax cold : 13 but he who hath endured to *the* end, this
 “ *one* shall be saved. 14 And this Gospel of the kingdom shall
 “ be proclaimed in all the world, for a testimony unto all the
 “ nations : and then will the end come.

15 “ When, therefore, ye see the abomination of desolation,
 “ that which was spoken of by means of Daniel the prophet,
 “ standing in an holy place—let him that is reading understand
 “ *it*. 16 Then let them who *are* in Judæa, flee unto the moun-
 “ tains : 17 let him who *is* on the housetop, not come down to
 “ take up any thing out of his house : 18 and let him who *is* in
 “ the field, not turn behind *him*, to take up his outer garments.
 “ 19 But woe to the *women* that are with child, and to the
 “ *women* that are giving suck, in those days : 20 and pray ye that
 “ your flight may not take place in winter, nor on a sabbath
 “ day. 21 For there will be then great tribulation, such as there
 “ hath not come to pass from *the* beginning of *the* world unto
 “ the present *time*, nor shall come to pass : 22 and had not those
 “ days been cut short, no flesh could have been saved : but for
 “ the sake of the elect ones, those days will be cut short.

23 “ At that time, should any one say to you, Behold, here
 “ *is* the Christ, or there *is* *the* Christ ! believe *him* not. 24 For
 “ false Christs and false prophets will be stirred up, and will
 “ give mighty signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if *it* be
 “ possible, even the elect. 25 Behold, I have foretold *it* to you.
 “ 26 If, therefore, they say to you, Behold, *the* Christ is in the
 “ desert ! go ye not forth : Behold, *he* is in the closets ! believe
 “ *them* not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out from (risings)
 “ *the* East, and is visible even to (settings) *the* West, so shall
 “ the appearing and presence also of the Son of man be. 28 For
 “ wheresoever the (fallen body) carcass may be, there will the
 “ eagles be got together.

29 “ Now after the tribulation of those days, immediately
 “ will the sun be made dark, and the moon will not give her
 “ light, and the stars will fall from the heaven, and the powers
 “ of the heavens will be shaken. 30 And then will the sign of
 “ the Son of man appear in the heaven : and then shall all the
 “ kindreds of the earth bewail themselves : and they shall see
 “ the Son of man coming upon the clouds of the heaven, with

“ much power and glory. ³¹ And he will send forth his angels,
 “ with a trumpet of mighty voice, and they shall bring together
 “ unto *him* his elect ones, out of the four winds, from *the* ends
 “ of *the* heavens to *the* ends thereof.

³² “ Now learn ye the parable from the fig-tree. When its
 “ branch is now become tender, and is putting forth the leaves,
 “ ye know that the summer *is* near. ³³ So also, when ye
 “ see all these things, know ye that *the* end is near, at *the* doors.
 “ ³⁴ Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not be passed
 “ away, until all these things be come to pass. ³⁵ The heaven
 “ and the earth shall pass away ; but my words shall not pass
 “ away.

³⁶ “ But concerning that day and hour, no one knoweth *it*,
 “ not even the angels of the heavens ; except my Father only.
 “ ³⁷ But as *were* the days of Noah, so shall the appearing and
 “ presence also of the Son of man be. ³⁸ For as they were, in
 “ the days that were before the deluge, eating and drinking,
 “ marrying and giving in marriage—unto the day when Noah
 “ entered into the ark, ³⁹ and were not aware until the deluge
 “ came, and took all together away ; so shall the appear-
 “ ing and presence also of the Son of man be. ⁴⁰ Then shall
 “ two *men* be in the field ; the one is taken, and the one is left.
 “ ⁴¹ Two *women* are grinding in the mill ; one is taken, and one
 “ is left. ⁴² Watch ye, therefore ; for ye know not in which
 “ hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But that ye know, that if the
 “ master of the house had known *in* which watch the thief is
 “ coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered
 “ his house to be dug through. ⁴⁴ Wherefore do ye also be-
 “ come ready ; for *in* an hour that ye are not thinking of, is the
 “ Son of man coming.”

MARK xiii. 1—37.

¹ And as he was departing out of the temple, one of his dis-
 ciples saith unto him, “ Master, see what manner of stones, and
 “ what manner of buildings !” ² And Jesus answered and said
 to him, “ Seest thou these great buildings ? Stone upon stone
 “ shall not be left, which shall not be utterly loosed.”

³ And as he was sitting upon the mount of Olives, over
 against the temple, Peter and James, and John and Andrew,

began to ask him apart, ⁴ “ Tell us when these things shall be, “ and what *is* the sign when all these things are about to be fulfilled ?”

⁵ And Jesus answered, and began to say unto them, “ Beware lest any one deceive you. ⁶ For many will come in my name, “ saying, I am *the Christ* ; and many they will deceive. ⁷ And “ when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be not “ alarmed ; for it must come to pass *thus*, but the end *is* not as “ yet. ⁸ For nation shall be stirred up against nation, and “ kingdom against kingdom ; and there will be earthquakes in “ such and such places, and there will be famines and troubles : “ *and* these things, beginnings of throes.

⁹ “ But look ye unto yourselves ; for they will deliver you up “ unto councils (*sanhedrims*), and in synagogues will ye be “ scourged ; and before governors and kings will ye be set, for “ my sake, for a testimony unto them. ¹⁰ And unto all the “ nations must the Gospel first be proclaimed. ¹¹ And when “ they have brought you, delivering *you* up, take no thought “ beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye practise *against* “ *it* ; but whatsoever be given you in that hour, this speak ye : “ for ye are not they that are speaking, but the Holy Ghost. “ ¹² And brother will deliver up brother unto death, and father “ *the* child ; and children will rise up against parents, and cause “ them to be put to death. ¹³ And ye will be hated by all *men* “ for my name’s sake ; but he who hath endured *to the* end, this “ *one* shall be saved.

¹⁴ “ Now when ye see the abomination of desolation, that “ which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it “ ought not, let him that is reading understand *it*. Then let “ them who *are* in Judæa, flee unto the mountains: ¹⁵ and let “ him who *is* on the housetop, not come down into the house, “ nor enter *it*, to take up any thing out of his house : ¹⁶ and “ let him who is in the field, not turn to the *parts* behind, to take “ up his outer garment. ¹⁷ But woe to the *women* that are with “ child, and to the *women* that are giving suck, in those days. “ ¹⁸ And pray ye that your flight may not take place in winter. “ ¹⁹ For those days will be tribulation, such as there hath “ not come to pass, from *the* beginning of creation which God “ created, unto the present *time*, and shall not come to pass. “ ²⁰ And had not *the* Lord cut short the days, no flesh could

“ have been saved ; but for the sake of the elect ones, whom
 “ he hath chosen (elected) he hath cut short the days.

21 “ And at that time should any one say to you, Behold,
 “ here *is* the Christ, or, Behold, there *is the Christ*, believe
 “ *him* not. 22 For false Christs and false prophets will be
 “ stirred up, and will give signs and wonders, in order to lead
 “ astray, if *it be* possible, even the elect. 23 But ye, see *to it* ;
 “ behold, I have foretold you all things.

24 “ But in those days, after that tribulation, will the sun be
 “ made dark, and the moon will not give her light, 25 and the
 “ stars of the heaven will be falling from *their place*, and the
 “ powers, that *are* in the heavens, will be shaken. 26 And then
 “ shall they see the Son of man coming in clouds, with much
 “ power and glory. 27 And then will he send forth his angels,
 “ and bring together unto *him* his elect ones, out of the four
 “ winds, from *the end* of earth to *the end* of heaven.

28 “ Now learn ye the parable from the fig-tree. When its
 “ branch is now become tender, and is putting forth the leaves,
 “ ye know that the summer is near. 29 So also when ye see
 “ these things beginning to come to pass, know ye that *the end*
 “ is near, at *the doors*. 30 Verily I say unto you, This genera-
 “ tion shall not be passed away, until all these things be come
 “ to pass. 31 The heaven and the earth shall pass away ; but
 “ my words shall not pass away.

32 “ But concerning that day and hour, no one knoweth *it*,
 “ not even the angels that *are* in heaven, neither the Son : ex-
 “ cept the Father. 33 See ye *to it*, be wakeful, and pray : for
 “ ye know not when the season is. 34 As a man, who was
 “ abroad, having left his household, and given authority to his
 “ servants, and to each *of them* his work, commanded the porter
 “ also that he should watch. 35 Watch ye therefore ; for ye
 “ know not when the lord of the household is coming ; at even,
 “ or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at morning—36 lest being
 “ come suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 And what things I say
 “ unto you, I say unto all, Watch ye.”

LUKE xxi. 5—36.

5 And when some were saying concerning the temple, how
 that it is adorned with goodly stones, and offerings, He said,
 6 “ *As for* these things which ye are beholding, *the days* will

“ come wherein stone upon stone shall not be left, which shall
 “ not be utterly loosed.”

7 And they asked him, saying, “ When, therefore, Master,
 “ shall these things be? and what *is* the sign, when these things
 “ are about to come to pass?”

8 And he said, “ Beware, lest ye be deceived. For many
 “ will come in my name, saying, I am *the Christ*: and the
 “ season is drawn near; go not ye, therefore, after them. 9 And
 “ when ye shall hear of wars and disquietudes (unsettled-
 “ nesses) be not terrified: for these things must come to pass
 “ first, but the end *is* not immediately.” 10 Then he began to
 say to them, “ Nation shall be stirred up against nation, and
 “ kingdom against kingdom:” 11 and there will be great earth-
 “ quakes in such and such places, and famines and pestilences:
 “ and great fearful sights and signs from heaven will there be.

12 “ But before all these things, they will lay their hands upon
 “ you, and will persecute *you*, delivering *you* up into synagogues
 “ and prisons, being brought unto kings and governors, for my
 “ name’s sake. 13 And it shall turn out unto you for a testi-
 “ mony. 14 Lay *it* up, therefore, in your hearts, not to practise
 “ beforehand to answer for *yourselves*: 15 for I will give you a
 “ mouth and wisdom, which all that *are* adversaries unto you,
 “ shall not be able to gainsay, nor to resist. 16 And ye will be
 “ delivered up, even by parents, and brethren, and kinsmen, and
 “ friends; and *some* of you will they cause to be put to death:
 “ 17 and ye will be hated by all *men* for my names’ sake. 18 Yet
 “ an hair from your head shall not be lost: 19 in your endurance
 “ get ye your lives.

20 “ Now when ye see Jerusalem beginning to be encircled
 “ with armies, then know ye that her desolation is drawn nigh.
 “ 21 Then let them, who *are* in Judæa, flee to the mountains:
 “ and let them, who *are* in the midst of her (Jerusalem) go out of
 “ *her*; and let them, who *are* in the fields, not go into her. 22 For
 “ days of avenging are these, that all the things that are writ-
 “ ten be fulfilled. 23 But woe to the *women* that are with child,
 “ and to the *women* that are giving suck, in those days. For
 “ there will be great distress upon the land, and *great* wrath upon
 “ this people: 24 and they will fall with *the* sword’s edge, and
 “ be made captives unto all the Gentiles: and Jerusalem will
 “ be trodden underfoot of Gentiles, until *the* seasons of Gentiles
 “ be fulfilled.

25 “ And there will be signs in *the sun, and moon, and stars* :
 “ and on the earth *there will be* a constant holding of nations in
 “ perplexity, *the sea, and the tossing thereof, roaring,* 26 men
 “ (dying away) swooning from fear and expectation of the things
 “ which are coming upon the world : for the powers of the hea-
 “ vens will be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man
 “ coming in a cloud, with much power and glory. 28 And when
 “ these things are beginning to come to pass, stoop upwards, and
 “ lift up your heads ; for that your redemption is drawing
 “ nigh.”

29 And he spake a parable unto them ; “ Look at the fig-tree
 “ and all the trees. 30 When they have now shot forth, upon
 “ seeing *it*, ye know of yourselves that the summer is now
 “ near. 31 So also, when ye see these things beginning to come
 “ to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Verily
 “ I say unto you, This generation shall not be passed away, un-
 “ til all *things* be come to pass. 33 The heaven and the earth
 “ shall pass away : but my words shall not pass away.

34 “ But take ye heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be
 “ made heavy in surfeit, and drunkenness, and cares that apper-
 “ tain to this life ; and that day come upon you suddenly.
 “ 35 For as a snare will it come upon all that are sitting on the
 “ face of all the earth. 36 Be ye watchful therefore, at every sea-
 “ son praying that ye may be accounted worthy to have escaped
 “ from all these things, that are about to come to pass, and to be
 “ set before the Son of man.”

PRELIMINARY MATTER.

IT is usual with commentators to regard the dis-
 course delivered on mount Olivet, on the evening of
 Wednesday in Passion-week, exclusively in the light
 of a prophecy : but though it cannot be denied that
 the name of a prophecy, and one of the most illus-
 trious of prophecies, is justly due to it—a very slight
 perusal of its contents is sufficient to satisfy us, that
 it comprehends much which is not prophetic, as well
 as much which is ; that along with predictions of

coming events, exhortations, directions, commands, and instructions are largely intermixed, closely indeed connected with those predictions, but, on no construction, to be considered, or treated as prophecies themselves. Nor is the proportion of this part of its contents, small, in comparison of the rest. On the contrary, were we to detach from the context every thing purely didactic or preceptive, we should be surprised, perhaps, to find how little would be left which was strictly and essentially prophetic.

That two very distinct lines of argument then, run through the discourse, from first to last, the business of one of which is to communicate the knowledge of future facts, and that of the other to counsel, to admonish, to warn and advise in a variety of ways, it would be impossible to deny, with the evidence of the discourse before us, to testify to the peculiarity of its own structure. It becomes a natural inference from this fact, that as prediction is one thing, and counsel or admonition is another, these two lines of argument cannot each be directed to an end and a purpose, properly the same; though as they are combined together, and run parallel with each other, the end of the one may possibly be connected with that of the other, and both may conspire to some one and the same purpose in common.

Nor is the combination of prophecy with precept more certain in the present instance, than the subordination of the final end of the prophetic to that of the moral or preceptive part of the discourse; there being no notice given in reference to the fu-

ture, nor any disclosure made of some event to come, on which notice or disclosure a practical admonition is not founded; whence it is an obvious inference, that the prophecy of the future in all such instances, was delivered for the sake of the precept annexed to it, and without the observance of the precept, the knowledge of the future communicated by the prophecy beforehand, would fail of its effect. Thus at the very outset, we find it predicted that “many should come in the name of Christ;” but plainly for the sake of the practical warning connected with the foreknowledge of that event, “Beware lest any one deceive you,” and “Go ye not after them.” Again, the hearers are told, “they should hear of wars, rumours of wars, and quietudes,” but they are told at the same time “to see to *it* and not to be alarmed.” They are forewarned to expect persecution for themselves, with all its consequences; but solely, that “they might look to themselves” betimes; that “they should lay it up in their hearts not to take thought beforehand, what they should speak; not to practise beforehand to answer for themselves;” that “in their endurance they should get them their lives.” When they are told, they should see “the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not;” it is for the sake of the admonition, immediately subjoined—“Let him that is reading understand *it*.” If they were to behold Jerusalem beginning to be encircled with armies, and if they might thence conclude that her desolation was drawn nigh; it is solely for the sake of the practical directions which follow, and were to be observed as the consequence

of the inference—"Then let them who are in Ju-
"dæa," &c.

The grounds of the induction, indeed, are so obvious in every part of the discourse, that we need not pursue it through each of its particulars: nothing being clearer than that the Divine foreknowledge of the speaker is exerted in all these revelations of the future, for no purpose but to guide, to direct, to influence, in some way or other, the conduct of those to whom he was speaking, under such circumstances of situation as they should find themselves placed in, when the events foretold came to pass. In some instances, this subordination of historical light to practical admonition, is so decided, that the future fact which supplies the ground of the precept is intimated by the way, while the practical direction, which presupposes it, stands forward and prominent. The conduct to be pursued at the time of the event, not the simple knowledge of the event beforehand, was uppermost in the thoughts of the speaker, in such cases, and that which he was most desirous to impress on his hearers. This characteristic of the discourse is especially true of that part of its predictions which relates to the appearance of false Christs.

The subordination of the prophetic to the practical part of the discourse being thus presumptively established; the final end of the former of these, if its several disclosures are directed to any common end, will naturally be subservient to that of the latter, if this also has some common object in view. That the prophetic matter of the discourse, down to a certain point at least, is directed to a specific

end and purpose, may, I think, be inferred from two very significant passages, which occur in it, at distinct intervals; one of them in a negative sense, serving to the same effect, as the other in a positive; the first, Matt. xxiv. 6: Mark xiii. 7: Luke xxi. 9: “But the end *is* not as yet,” or “But the end *is* not immediately:” the other, Matt. xxiv. 14: “And then will the end come.”

It is observable of the first of these allusions to the end, that it makes part of the narrative of the prophecy in the account of each of the Evangelists; that the first allusion to that subject, formed a break in the order of the delivery of the prophecy—a comparison of St. Luke’s narrative of it with that of the other two, shewing, that when our Lord had begun to speak, and for some time continued to speak, in such terms as they all agree in ascribing to him—upon arriving at the first of these allusions to the subject of the *end*, he made a pause: and it is equally observable, with respect to the second, that, having resumed his discourse, and continued it substantially to the same effect in each of the Evangelists—there is every reason to believe he made another pause, when he had pronounced the words of Matthew xxiv. 14. which closes with the allusion to the end in question a second time.

Now it would not be easy satisfactorily to account for the introduction of the negative clause, in the first of these instances, or for that of the affirmative in the other, under such peculiar circumstances; except by supposing that the principal design of the disclosures and communications either already made, or about to be made, of the course of future events, was to enable the hearers, for whose benefit they

were made, to judge with equal precision both negatively and affirmatively of the time of the same event which is here called the *end*; both when it should be still distant, or “not as yet,” and when it should be near at hand, that is, “immediately” about to ensue. With respect to the event itself, denoted by this name of the *end*, the context of all the Evangelists, and especially of St. Matthew’s account, very plainly intimates that it is closely connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, the approaching visitation of the Jews; and consequently may be understood either of the appointed close and termination of the previous period of longsuffering and forbearance, before the commencement of the days of vengeance—or of the dissolution of the existing state of things among the Jews, the close of the Mosaic dispensation, the end of their polity both ecclesiastical and civil—or of both.

The common end then of the prophetic matter of the present discourse, up to a certain point at least—that is, of so much of the discoveries of the future as were made in reference to the period of this memorable catastrophe—we may conclude to be, to supply the knowledge of certain things, before which it could not happen, and of others, after which it could not be delayed. Presages and tokens of the approaching event all were more or less to be, but presages and tokens of different degrees of significancy; some shewing it to be merely coming on, others to be close at hand: of the first of which it might be said, *These things indeed must precede, but the end will not be yet*; and of the second, *These things shall first precede, and then will the end itself come next.*

This view of the general drift of the prophecy is in unison with that account of its origin which each of the Evangelists concurs in giving; viz. that all these disclosures of the future, comprehended in the discourse on the mount, were vouchsafed in answer to an express inquiry from four of our Lord's apostles. This inquiry embraced two points at least—(and probably three, as we shall see hereafter); the first, to state them in the way in which they are recorded by St. Matthew, "When these things shall be?" the second, "What is the sign of thy appearing and presence?" The producing cause of the prophecy, then, was this inquiry: the immediate cause of the inquiry is very probably to be traced up to the answer, returned by our Lord not long before, to one of his disciples^a, who, as they were passing out of the temple for the night, had called his attention to the stones and buildings of which it was composed—the grandeur and magnificence of its structure, the number, variety, and costliness of the ornaments or dedicated things, with which it was embellished.

It is of importance that we should attend to the nature of our Lord's reply to that observation; "Seest thou these great buildings? Stone upon stone shall not be left, which shall not be utterly loosed:" because it predicts in the plainest terms the entire overthrow of that sumptuous fabric; but nothing more. It was eminently qualified, there-

^a This disciple was probably St. Peter. St. Mark only specifies the observation as addressed to our Lord by *one* of his disciples; and even if this one was St. Peter, St. Mark would naturally speak of him in that indefinite manner, rather than by name.

fore, to convey a mournful certainty of the futurity of the fact, though perfectly silent as to the time and circumstances, of the destruction in question; which nevertheless the assurance of the futurity of the event, some time or other, might render the hearers only the more desirous to know. The inquiry immediately after put by the four apostles is exactly such as might have been expected under such circumstances. This inquiry too takes facts for granted in each instance, and asks for information only about circumstances, “*When* shall these “things be?” and “*What* is the sign of thy appearing and presence?” It is assumed that those things must some time be; the only uncertainty, in the apprehension of the inquirers, is *when* they must be: it is taken for granted that Christ must have an appearing and presence, and that appearing and presence a sign; the only doubt was, *what* sign.

If the principal object, then, of the question of the apostles, which directly produced this discourse, was not to be certified of the truth of general facts, but of subordinate circumstances, connected with them; the answer of our Lord, in the particular disclosures of the future vouchsafed by it, might be expected to be accommodated to the views of the inquirers accordingly. And so, indeed, it was, if the account which has been given of the end of the prophetic part of his discourse more especially, is correct; that it was intended to supply them not with the simple assurance of an event still to come, whether yet distant or even then near at hand—but taking the futurity of the event for granted, to give them the means of judging of its approach; when it should yet be comparatively remote, and when it

should now be close at hand. But unless we were to suppose that the object of the apostles in desiring thus much information, or the answer of our Lord in vouchsafing it, had no further motive than the mere gratification of a curiosity to pry into the future; we may take it for granted that both they and he, and more particularly our Lord himself, consulted some higher and worthier, because more practical and beneficial end, by all that passed upon this occasion between himself and them. And if the nature of any such further motive does not appear upon the face of the question, we must endeavour to collect it from the reply of our Lord.

The combination of practical admonitions with predictions of the future, in every part of the discourse, has been already insisted on; and the subserviency of the final end of the simply prophetic, to that of the simply preceptive matter, has been thence very naturally inferred. Now as this prophetic portion of the whole, though designed to facilitate a common end, viz. the perception of the true time of the arrival of one and the same event, differed in its subserviency to this common purpose, by assigning one class or description of events, designed as prognostics to shew it at a distance, and another, which should intimate it to be close at hand; so in the directions associated with these predictions all through, is a similar distinction perceptible, of one class of precepts which go along with the prophetic intimations of the former kind, and another which accompany those of the latter. It was to be expected, that different lines of conduct would be proper to be pursued, and therefore a different

kind of advice would require to be given, before and after the time of the event in question : it might even be consistent with the situation of the parties, and the nature of the case, to require or to advise them to do one thing at one of these times, and the very contrary to it at the other.

There is accordingly a very observable difference in the strain of the precepts and admonitions which accompany and apply the disclosures of the future, at one time, and those which do the same at another—that cannot be explained except on this principle. After that point in the order of prediction, where it is said, “ And then will the end come,” we meet with warnings, admonitions, and instructions, the direct tendency of which is to excite alarm and apprehension in those to whom they are addressed, and could answer their purpose solely by the production of such fears : before that point, and so long as it might still be said, “ But the end is not as yet,” we meet with assurances whose tendency to remove all sense of fear and uneasiness in the hearers, is just as clear. After one of these times we meet with plain intimations of instant danger ; before it, with distinct assurances that all was secure ; each, as it would seem, alike opposed to existing appearances, or what the hearers might have imagined for themselves. Beyond a certain period in the discourse, injunctions crowd thick upon the hearers, urging departure and flight, with the utmost expedition, secrecy, and dispatch ; until then, others are found addressed to them, which on the very principle of contraries, if their own language did not shew for what they were meant, must be interpreted strictly to recommend a continued stay. There is no means of reconciling

these distinct and opposite lines of argument in the same preceptive department of the discourse, as combined with, but different from, the prophetic in the same; except by supposing that as the prophetic part of the discourse in general was subservient to the preceptive, and the knowledge of future facts was vouchsafed for the direction of future conduct only; so both the lines of the preceptive part in particular, are equally subordinate to one common end, which is kept in view in each—the personal safety, the personal benefit and welfare of the hearers, as well as their personal direction and instruction—a benefit, welfare, and safety to which it was as necessary that they should be commanded or instructed not to do the same thing at one time, as to do it at another.

This preliminary view of the general design and tendency of the prophecy on the mount, in both its parts, will derive considerable confirmation and illustration, both, from a comparison of the present prophecy, with so much of the discourse recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. Luke, as was comprehended between the 22nd verse and the end. It was stated at the time when that discourse was under review, preparatory to the exposition of the parable of the unjust judge, that it was to all intents and purposes a prelude to the prophecy on mount Olivet; that so far as they accompanied each other in reference to a common topic, they agreed not only in substance, but frequently in terms; and considering both of them disclosures in common, on one and the same subject of prophetic revelation, differing in the order of time—there was no more distinction between them, than between the original outline,

and the subsequent filling up of the same picture' of futurity ; that where there were omissions in the one, they were supplied in the other, and what was generally alluded to before, was specifically defined, and characterised by the circumstances of time, and place, and other individuating marks of distinction, subsequently. To recapitulate in brief the substance of that former discourse.

It was seen to commence with a plain allusion to some approaching period of distress and suffering, personally affecting the hearers ; to be followed however, in due time, by a period of deliverance and redress. It predicted that the arrival of this period of deliverance, (to which it gave the name of the coming of one of the days of the Son of man,) should be preceded by signs and tokens of its approach, in the circumstances of passing events—some of them such as might be mistaken for the forerunners of it, if not for the signals of its immediate advent. But it cautioned the hearers, the observers of those symptoms, against so misconstruing their meaning ; or in the strength of that persuasion, consulting for their safety prematurely : and it gave a sufficient reason for this caution, by promising in no obscure manner, that the true time of the approach of the day in question should be preceded and made known by an infallible sign, which all, who were concerned in observing it, should be able to see, and none should be at a loss to comprehend. It insinuated likewise that the appearance of this sign should be followed by an interval of darkness and repose, favourable for the purpose of escape and flight. It described in language the most forcible and picturesque, two remarkable characteristics of the catastrophe which should

ensue at last; its suddenness, as totally unlooked for before the event, its destructiveness, when arrived, as indiscriminate and exterminating in its effects. It concluded with a series of practical exhortations, the most earnest and impressive of their kind, founded on the knowledge of both these properties of the coming visitation—the substance of which was this; that the hearers should take instant advantage of the brief and limited opportunity, providentially granted them, to make their escape from their devoted city and country; promising protection and security to those who did so, and not obscurely intimating that all who did not, should perish.

We may lay it down, then, as a sufficiently correct assumption of the nature, constitution, and final end of this memorable prophecy, that it is a prophetic revelation of the future not simple, or uniform in its construction, but mixed; combining together two distinct topics of argument, which run parallel with each other throughout it, the purely prophetic and the purely preceptive—the end of the former being subordinate to that of the latter, and both conspiring to a common purpose, the preservation and safety of the Hebrew Christians amidst that series of national calamities, which were about to fall promiscuously on the rest of their countrymen. It takes for granted the fact of the visitation, as well as the fact of its opposite consequences to the unbelieving and the believing part of the same community respectively; that the infidel Jews should be involved in the common ruin, the Christian Jews should be rescued from it. It takes it for granted also that the means of their deliverance at the proper time, should be a speedy

flight from the scene of the approaching calamity. Meanwhile, it is the object of the prophetic part of these disclosures in general, to regulate their judgment in forming an estimate of the approach of the event, and determining the time of their escape ; it is the object of the preceptive to prescribe rules for their conduct before, and at this time. By the one they would be taught to conclude when the event was still remote, and when it was near at hand ; by the other, they would be forewarned to act accordingly—neither commencing their departure before the critical moment, nor delaying it after it ; and each, because of the danger which their personal safety would otherwise be liable to incur.

If the present discourse, therefore, is a memorable instance of our Lord's prescience, it is an equally illustrious, and no less amiable and affecting demonstration of his tender regard and concern for the welfare of his beloved disciples, the faithful few, who should bear his name, and profess his religion, in the midst of their unbelieving countrymen, in opposition to influence, prejudice, and example ; regardless of shame, disgrace, and obloquy ; superior to the strongest ties of natural or acquired endearment ; indifferent to the love of ease, of fortune, of friends, or families, for their master's sake ; unexhausted by suffering, however acute and protracted ; in defiance of menaces, hatred, persecution, chains, and death. It is entirely on their behalf, and with a view to their safety beforehand, that his omniscience exerts itself in these large and wonderful revelations of the course of future events. By means of his timely forewarnings, the Hebrew Christian could extend his prospect far into the dismal and appalling scene

which lay yet in embryo; and in the pregnant symptoms of approaching judgment on his country and nation in general, could discern the day-spring of hope, and the earnest of coming deliverance to himself and his brethren of the faith. The ominous signs of the times were the auspices of redress to him. In the midst of surrounding danger he could reckon on security: in the moment of imminent destruction he might rely with confidence on the promise of protection. The care and foresight of his Divine Master had placed him on an eminence, whence he might discover beforehand the first gathering of the storm, might watch with composure its gradual advances, and before it could burst over his head, would have means and opportunity to provide for his safety by a timely escape.

The same solicitude for the ultimate welfare of the disciples appears in those parts of the discourse also, which while they predict a period of suffering and tribulation about to ensue—exhort to steadfastness and perseverance under it. The final end of this part conspires with that of the other two. Unless the Hebrew Christians continued firm in their integrity to the end, the providence of God could not be exerted at last, to make a way for their deliverance from the common destruction of their countrymen. The effect of long and systematic persecution is necessarily pregnant with danger to the constancy of faith. It would prove to be so in their instance; apostasy in some, a growing lukewarmness in the love of others, might be apprehended as its consequences. Yet the believing Jew is promised present immunity from every species of intermediate judgment, and salvation at last from the

great national visitation itself, solely on the supposition that his patience never failed, that his constancy never was shaken, that his faith never wavered, under all that he might be called upon to suffer for his religion's, and his righteousness' sake. He that had endured to the end was to be saved; in their endurance they were to get them their lives; and as the reward of their firmness and perseverance, at the proper time, not an hair of their head should be found to have perished. The power of God could not be expected to be specially interposed for their protection against those evils, which the malice and hostility of the enemies of the truth might bring for a time upon its professors; but only from those which he himself should in the end dispense, in resentment of these very evils, and for the punishment of their authors. The former would be mercifully permitted for the probation of the faith of his servants; the latter would be necessary at last, as a just retribution on the malice and guilt of his adversaries. Under the former, the subjects must be left, as Christians in such circumstances are uniformly left for the time, to derive the energies of passive endurance from the strength of their own conviction, the resources of their own patience, and the aids of Divine grace: under the latter, the special intention of the dispensations themselves would require a distinction to be drawn between the friends and the enemies of the truth, and a special exemption to be accorded to the former, from every penal infliction ultimately brought on the latter.

From the above conclusions it would be easy to deduce certain principles or rules of interpretation,

in reference to both the divisions of the discourse, by means of which the particular kind of facts predicted by the one, and the particular scope of the injunctions contained in the other, might be most correctly estimated. We cannot proceed, however, to the details of the discourse, without premising something relating to the structure of the whole, and the distribution necessary to be made of its parts.

With reference to the inquiry which immediately produced the prophecy, commentators have assumed that two questions only were asked, “When these things shall be,” and “What *is* the sign of thy appearing and presence, and of the end of the period of ages?” The grammatical construction of the original in this last instance, however, is obviously such as to allow of the supposition that the words “what is the sign,” may be carried on to the second member of the proposition, as well as be prefixed to the first; in which case two questions were virtually comprehended in this one; viz. “What is the sign of thy appearing and presence?” and “What is the sign of the end of the period of ages?” Nor could these be assumed to amount to one and the same inquiry, unless it could be shewn that in the apprehension of the inquirers, the event, denoted by the appearing and presence of their master, was necessarily identical with that which was denoted by the end of the period of ages; or that the sign, about which they desired information, as expected to precede the one, must needs be the same with the sign which might also be expected to precede the other. And with respect to the reply of our Lord to their questions, another opinion adopted by the expositors

of the prophecy, is that while he answers only two inquiries, he answers them in an inverted order; whereas, I think, it may be shewn that while he supplies such information upon various points, as presupposes three questions to have been originally put, he supplies it upon each point in its turn, and with a very exact accommodation of the method and subject-matter of the answer, to the order and purport of the questions which produced it. Nor would commentators, perhaps, have come to the contrary conclusion, had they taken care to remark that the point of the inquiry in the second instance, was not signs or tokens in general, but some one sign, or one token in particular. We have, in fact, only to take St. Matthew's account for our guide, to be satisfied that the several divisions of the answer of our Lord, correspond to the several topics of the inquiry of the apostles, and that the transition from one of these topics to another is very distinctly marked out therein.

If the knowledge of the exact time, the very day or hour appointed for the commencement of any of the penal dispensations of the Divine providence, especially of those more extraordinary ones, called *the days of the Son of man*, and identified in any sense with the fact of an appearing and presence of Jesus Christ in person, as coming to judgment, whether on a smaller or a larger scale; is one of the deep secrets of God, which the Father purposely reserves for his own keeping; even such a question as this, with reference to the time of the visitation of the Jews, "When shall these things be?" could not be answered except generally, by specifying

certain criteria of the different stages of its approach ; by enabling the observers to judge when it was comparatively distant, and when it was near at hand ; by defining some point in the intervening period, before which it could not be expected, and after which it could not be delayed. This kind of answer to the question, “When shall these things be?” I apprehend to be contained between verse 4, and verse 14, inclusive, in St. Matthew’s account of the discourse.

The next question, “What is the sign of thy appearing and presence?” I apprehend to be properly answered in the part which follows, from verse 15 to verse 28 inclusive ; with this difference only, that the first part of the answer, from verse 15 to 22 inclusive, relates to this question directly, being designed to shew what the sign should be ; the remainder, from verse 23 to 28, indirectly, being intended, as it will appear hereafter, to shew what it should not be.

The remaining part of this second question, whether actually put and actually intended by the inquirers, as a third and an independent question, is yet answered by our Lord as such, in the paragraph which follows, from verse 29 to verse 31 inclusive.

Such is the substance of the discourse, considered as an answer to the questions out of which it arose, and with respect to the several points upon which the interrogators solicited information ; and in this order, and with this division of its contents, I propose to consider it ; though much more is certainly comprised both in the twenty-fourth of St. Matthew, from the thirty-second verse downwards, and in the

twenty-fifth likewise, as the account of what was said on the same occasion, which will require to be considered in its turn; and which was no doubt connected in some proper manner with what had preceded.

We have not yet, however, done with the terms of the original inquiry, more especially in reference to the second and the third of the above particulars. Had the question of the apostles, under the circumstances of the case, been simply expressed, Tell us, when these things shall be; and consequently, restricted to the first of the above points in particular; nothing more, perhaps, would have been necessary satisfactorily to explain its being put, but the natural desire which we may suppose to have been excited by the recent extraordinary declaration respecting the fate of the temple—to know something further of the time and the circumstances of so unlikely, and so calamitous an event. But when it passes to the mention of a *παρουσία*, or personal advent of Christ himself, the fact of which was not so much as hinted at in the preceding declaration; it is manifest that the origin of the question cannot be traced back ultimately to this declaration merely. Or should it be considered probable that this expectation of a personal advent of Jesus Christ, sometime or other—and consequently, this allusion to the fact of such an event, soon after—might have been produced by Matt. xxiii. 39, the conclusion of that address to the Scribes and Pharisees, with the delivery of which our Lord made an end of the proceedings of the day, in public, before he quitted the temple; yet how shall we account for the expecta-

tion of a sign to precede that advent, and for that evident solicitude, which appears in the words of the inquiry, to know more about this sign in particular, than about the advent in general? How shall we explain too, the allusion to a *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, or an end of the period of ages, as well as to the *παρουσία*, or personal advent of Jesus Christ; if the origin of the former, as much as of the latter, is to be referred to Matt. xxiii. 39^r?

^r Some commentators on the prophecy, explain the phrase *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, in the present instance, by referring to a supposed division of time among the Jews; the period before, the period under, and the period subsequent to the continued existence of their own law; these periods being termed collectively *οἱ αἰῶνες*, and each in its turn *ὁ αἰών*. The second of these periods would now be current; and what the apostles are thought to be inquiring about, in this part of their question, is the appointed time of the consummation of that, and the beginning of the next.

I do not think it necessary to enter at any length upon the consideration of this opinion. The phrase in question, as a Gospel phrase, is peculiar to St. Matthew; in whose Gospel it occurs four other times, always as it seems to me, in its simple and obvious sense of the end or consummation of the existing state of things; but whether that which ushers in the millenary dispensation, or that which precedes the transition of the things of time and sense into those of spirit and eternity—to the proper meaning of the words, (which is no more than that of the close or conclusion of the period of ages,) is perfectly indifferent. See Matt. xiii. 39, 40. 49; xxviii. 20. It appears only reasonable to judge of its meaning in the present instance, by the analogy of these other instances. Compare Hebrews ix. 26, where the phrase, *συντέλεια τῶν αἰώνων*, though not *τοῦ αἰῶνος*, occurs, to denote the period or point of time in the world's existence, at which the Son of God appeared in the flesh, to do away sin, by his one sacrifice of himself, once offered; a period which might well be called a *συντέλεια τῶν αἰώνων*, if it was, as I endeavoured to shew in my former work, a cardinal division of time

It was an obvious peculiarity of the inquiry of the apostles, upon each of its points, that it implied an assurance or a knowledge of some things, a doubt or an ignorance of others ; an assurance of the prin-

in the existence of the world ; when two thirds of that existence were elapsed, and one third still remained to elapse, before the consummation of the whole. Cf. also I Cor. x. 11, τὰ τελεῖ τῶν αἰῶνων, which means almost the same thing.

It would be another strong objection to the above construction of these words, that so much of our Lord's answer as will be seen hereafter to describe the signs which are destined to precede his second personal advent, and consequently the end of the existing state of things, in one sense or other, was clearly produced by this part of the question of the apostles.

And as to the supposition that any Jew of the present day, unless expressly taught to expect such an event by an infallible authority like our Saviour's, could have contemplated, *a priori*, the suspension, termination, or supersession of his own system of faith or practice ; let us hear what the accusers of Stephen laid to his charge, Acts vi. 11 : τότε ὑπέβαλον ἄνδρας λέγοντας· ὅτι ἀκηκόαμεν αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος ῥήματα βλάβσημα εἰς Μωσῆν καὶ τὸν Θεόν. And what these words of blasphemy or disparagement against Moses, as well as against God, were, we learn from verses 13, 14 : ὁ ἄνθρωπος οὗτος οὐ παύεται ῥήματα βλάβσημα λαλῶν κατὰ τοῦ τόπου τοῦ ἁγίου τούτου, καὶ τοῦ νόμου· ἀκηκόαμεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος οὗτος καταλύσει τὸν τόπον τοῦτον, καὶ ἀλλάξει τὰ ἔθνη ἃ παρέδωκεν ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς. We may contend even, on the authority of Acts xxiii. 20, 21, that so late as U. C. 809. A. D. 56, not one of the common believing Jews of Jerusalem was prepared to expect such an event as the change or extinction of the Law of Moses *in toto* ; while as to the unbelieving Jews, the effect of the address to them, at verse 28, from the old adversaries of St. Paul, sufficiently proves how little they were disposed to tolerate the idea of the same thing.

Τὰ δὲ τούτου, sc. τοῦ νόμου, says Philo, μόνον βέβαια, ἀσάλευτα, ἀκραδάντα, καθάπερ σφραγιδι φύσεως αὐτῆς σεσημασμένα, μένει παγίως ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἐγράφη μέχρι νῦν· καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἔπειτα πάντα διαμενεῖν ἐλπίς αὐτὰ αἰῶνα, ὡσπερ ἀθάνατα, ἕως ἂν ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη, καὶ ὁ σύμπας οὐρανός τε καὶ κόσμος ᾗ.

cial facts, a doubt or an ignorance about their circumstances. The motive to their question was plainly a desire to have this doubt or this ignorance removed; and the motive to that desire, as it appears from the answer of our Lord, if not from the terms of the question, must have been an antecedent conviction of a strong personal interest of their own, in the event of the things predicted; which required the removal of all doubt or ignorance about them. But whence arose the sense of this personal interest in the matter of their own inquiry, which was present to the minds of the interrogators even before they inquired about it? To explain its origin, we have but to refer to that prior discourse, recorded in the seventeenth of St. Luke. If those who heard what was then said, had any the least conception of its drift and application, they must have been impressed by it with the conviction that their own safety was deeply concerned in the fulfilment of such predictions, whensoever and howsoever they might come to pass; and it would be incredible, that impressed with such a conviction, they should not have felt anxious to know more about things in which they were personally so much interested. The particulars of the discourse at that time, were abundantly full and clear, with respect to the directive part, but purposely, as it would seem, indefinite and obscure, with respect to the prophetic. The language of the speaker, in reference to the judgment called his day, might not actually promise a personal advent or reappearance of himself, and yet it might be construed so to promise it; and while the expectation of a sign to notify the time of its arrival was distinctly raised by it, the individual

characters of the sign, beyond its general description as eminently calculated for the purpose intended by it, as intelligible, decisive, infallible—were studiously kept out of sight. By referring, therefore, to the particulars of the preceding transaction, we refer, in all probability, to the true cause of the inquiries which produced the subsequent discourse on mount Olivet ; we refer, at least, to what was capable both of raising the feeling of a personal interest on the part of the inquirers, in the subject-matter of the disclosures about which they ask, and of accounting for the terms in which their question was couched. We refer to that which, striking as it was, had passed probably not many days before; and with the exception of what had preceded in the temple, and what followed in the course of the same evening on mount Olivet, was the last, and certainly the most copious of all the communications which the Gospel history has left on record, upon a subject so solemn and so momentous as the days of the Son of man, whether in reference to the first of their number, the visitation of the Jews, or to the last, at the end of the world. We refer to that, therefore, which we may presume to have been fresh in the recollection of its hearers ; and which, had it even slumbered in their memories, the recent declaration coinciding so critically with it, could not fail to awaken ^t.

^t True it is, that the recollection of former declarations or prophecies of our Saviour, all concurring to intimate the futurity of some great national calamity, and therefore possessing a peculiar interest for Jews, would have its effect in producing the same solicitude for further and more plenary information upon such subjects. Nor was any thing of this kind likely to be better remembered, or to have affected the hearers more

After these preliminary observations, we may proceed to the examination of the details of the discourse; subject to those general principles which I proposed to take as my guide, with respect to the interpretation of both its parts. These general principles I shall state first in reference to the prophetic, or historical division.

It has been shewn to be the end of this part of the discourse, in general, to enable the Hebrew Christians to judge beforehand of the more remote, or the proximate approach of the calamity impending on their country; its particular subserviency to that purpose being twofold—by marking out beforehand the point of time in the whole of a certain intervening period, until which the event could not be anticipated, and after which it could not be delayed; and conforming its disclosures accordingly, by specifying beforehand one class of events which should shew the end to be approaching, but not yet come, and another, which should shew it to be arrived, and therefore the catastrophe to be close at

deeply, than the prediction of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, so plainly and pathetically recorded, Luke xix. 41—44, as delivered only two days before this time. It is worthy of remark, accordingly, that the turn or form of expression, in which St. Luke more particularly represents the question of the apostles to have been put on this occasion, *Διδάσκαλε, πότε ΟΥΝ ταῦτα ἔσται*; contains an indication of something like a long-cherished anxiety to know more of the subject-matter of the question, breaking forth with the first opportunity afforded for its gratification. We might render these words, “Master, BUT “when shall these things be?” a very abrupt interrogation apparently, with reference to the context, but not so, if referred to what was probably passing in the minds of the interrogators at the time, as the consequence not only of what they had just heard, but also of what they had often heard to the like effect.

hand. This order of the disclosures of the prophecy we must follow in our consideration of them; beginning with those, the intention and effect of which was negative, as much as positive; was more calculated to allay apprehension for the present than to excite alarm for the future—by exhibiting the great day to be coming on, but as plainly intimating that it was not yet come: a division of the whole, extending in St. Matthew's account, from verse 4 inclusive to verse 14.

Upon the subject-matter of these disclosures themselves, it may be observed that some of them are such, as from their very nature, must affect a whole community, and consequently must be termed public or national: others, such as would necessarily be confined in their sensible operation to a part of a community, and so far may be called individual or private. The former are comprehended between the fourth and eighth verses; the latter between the ninth and fourteenth. The Jews in general would be affected by the one; the Christian Jews in particular by the other: the former then might be matter of general history, because matter of national experience; the latter might escape the notice of contemporary history, because matter of private or particular experience. There can be no question that the specific prediction of one of these classes was designed to serve the same purpose, as that of the other; and that both being regarded in the light of signs or tokens of coming events, what befell the believing part of the Jewish community individually, would be just as significant as what happened to their unbelieving countrymen: yet the rules or canons of interpretation which we may have

to propose, for the explanation of the historical portions of the prophecy, it must be obvious will require to be considered applicable to events of the former class more especially, or to such predictions the fulfilment of which admits of being illustrated by the general history of the times, rather than by the particular history of the Hebrew church.

When, then, we consider the common scope and design of all these disclosures of the future; for whose instruction and benefit they were intended by their author; upon whom the visitation, of which the predicted events were the presages, when it came to pass, was destined to fall; we may reasonably take it for granted that no matter of fact can be supposed to have been prophetically contemplated in this revelation of the future, which was not of a nature to answer the purpose of a sign with such a peculiar signification as this: which did not happen before the time of the visitation of the Jews; which did not occur within the precincts of Judæa, or if any thing of the same kind might happen elsewhere, which did not occur in Judæa also; which did not affect the Jews directly, and exclusively, or at least much more than in common with the rest of the world; which did not pass before the eyes of the Hebrew Christians, or if not immediately subject to their observation, was not of such a nature in itself as to come in the end to their knowledge; which was not calamitous in its direct consequences, and ominous in its future forebodings, if not to themselves, yet to their countrymen.

With regard, indeed, to this last condition, we may justly consider it of so much importance as to

be almost tantamount to the rest, and singly equivalent to the sum and substance of every other characteristic of such events. The signs and harbingers of a great national visitation, whatever they may be in themselves, yet to possess their peculiar meaning and significancy, must partake of the nature of *judgments*; and in proportion to the sphere of their operation and effects, must approximate to an identity with the foreshewn visitation itself. Nor is it a little remarkable, that every one of the events described and characterised as about to precede, with this further import in the fact of their occurrence, are of the disastrous, the penal, the vindictive kind—such as are either themselves the instances of national visitations for national offences, or apt forerunners of them; the ἀρχαὶ ὠδίνων, or “beginnings “of throes”—the pangs which announce the approach, and possess more or less of the nature of the pains of labour, though they amount not as yet to the agony of the parturition, or to the throes of the actual travail.

Combining together the three accounts, each of two of which specifies *one* particular among this class of events, omitted by the rest, we obtain the following division of the events themselves, and in the following order: first, the rise and appearance of false Christs; secondly, wars, and rumours of wars, or as St. Luke expresses it, wars and disquietudes (ἀκαταστασίαι); thirdly, the rising of nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom—which are classed apparently together, as events of like kind *in genere*, though different *in specie*; fourthly, great earthquakes in such and such places (κατὰ

τόπους), famines, and pestilences; which likewise are classed, apparently, together, as events of a kindred nature, and consequently admitting of being differently specified in the order of succession—St. Matthew placing earthquakes last, St. Mark and St. Luke placing them first; but both St. Matthew and St. Luke, who only mention pestilences as well as famines, concurring in placing the former after the latter: fifthly, troubles (ταραχαί) specified by St. Mark alone, in conjunction with the other particulars of the fourth class, but posterior to them: sixthly, great fearful sights, (φόβητρα,) and signs from heaven (σημεῖα ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ), specified by St. Luke.

On the above enumeration of signs, several remarks may be made. First, that the evangelists from whose united accounts they are collected, concur in assigning them one and the same order of succession; viz. that in which they have been stated. Secondly, that after the first two we find a particular admonition appended, which is not subjoined to any of the rest. Thirdly, that upon the authority of St. Luke, we may infer that when our Lord had specified these two classes of events, in such terms, he paused in his discourse for a time, before he proceeded to the enumeration of the signs which follow. Fourthly, that from the moment of the resumption of his discourse, the order and particulars of the signs in the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth classes, exhibit so remarkable an uniformity in each of the accounts, that we may reasonably infer not only the different kind of events which were about to happen, but the order in which they should come to pass, to be intimated

by these statements; that the signs of the third class should not only differ from those of the fourth, but in point of time should precede them; and so of the rest. Fifthly, that the events themselves whose order seems to be thus beforehand determined, are the ordinary instances of the interference of the Divine providence, for judicial or penal purposes, in both of its departments of the government of the world, the moral and the physical; its operations of the former kind being intimated by the signs of the third class, in the convulsion or dissolution of the social order; those of the second, by signs of the fourth and sixth classes, in affections or disturbances of the order of nature; the signs of the fifth, or remaining class, being naturally the consequences of those of the fourth, and therefore in the enumeration and description of them all in common, to be taken as appendages of that class. And this agreement in the general nature of the particular signs of the fourth class, I apprehend to be sufficient to explain why St. Matthew, in the order of their statement, places earthquakes after the other two, St. Mark and St. Luke before them; though the distinction in this respect may be reducible to another principle, viz. that St. Mark and St. Luke both wrote their Gospels later than St. Matthew, and possibly not until after the event itself had shewn in what particular order the prediction of such facts as these was intended to be fulfilled, and actually did receive its fulfilment; whereas St. Matthew in all probability, composed his Gospel before there was any such criterion to direct him in the order of his statements in this instance.

Concerning then, the signs of the last four classes,

we are perhaps entitled to contend, that the prophecy will be found not only historically correct, but withal chronologically exact; a conclusion, which will be confirmed upon the whole, by our subsequent inquiries into the fulfilment of the things predicted: thus much at least being certain, upon indisputable evidence, that the signs of the third class were among the first to come to pass, and those of the sixth among the last; in which case those of the fourth and the fifth, in the order of time, must have come between the two. But with regard to the signs of the first and second class—no such inference could be drawn beforehand, under the circumstances of the case, that these would probably be found to precede the rest in the order of time, because they preceded them in the order of enumeration; though such an inference might turn out to be consistent with the matter of fact, and capable of being proved historically to hold good. The use which is made of these signs shews that, as designed for a purpose distinct from the rest, they must be considered to stand alone; to be selected, as it were, from the body of signs in general, with a view to a special signification, the nature of which is to be collected from the practical direction, accompanying them. These two descriptions of signs then possess a double relation, one to the prophetical, and another to the preceptive part of the discourse; on which account more particularly, as well as for other reasons which will appear hereafter, I shall not begin with them in the order of consideration, though they are the first in the order of enumeration, and as early as any in the order of occurrence; but with those of the third and the following classes.

With respect, indeed, to the question of the historical fulfilment of the prediction in any of these instances; one observation is very necessary to be made, and to be kept in view throughout; that the events predicted being regarded in the light of signs, bearing a special reference to a certain point of time before and after the period of their occurrence, it is the *first* instance of such events, with which we are properly concerned, and not such repetitions of the same as might occur again, from time to time afterwards. If these first instances were early enough to answer the purpose designed by the events, the fulfilment of the prediction of them, the attainment of the end proposed by making them known beforehand, would be satisfactory and complete; and yet the same events might continue to be repeated up to the point of time in question, and even beyond it, and these instances of their recurrence might be comprehended in the description given of them beforehand, as well as in the first examples of the kind. Every such event possessed a twofold character, one in relation to the disciples of Jesus Christ, as the spectators of it, and another in relation to the Jews, as the sufferers from it. By the Hebrew Christians, whom our Saviour had instructed beforehand in their use and meaning, while the catastrophe was still distant, and they were yet waiting for the distinct and decisive intimation of its approach, which had been promised them—all these minor visitations would be regarded as the signs or presages of some greater calamity still in reserve; while, in reference to their unbelieving countrymen, the same visitations which served for warnings in behalf of the disciples, would fulfil the

purposes of punishments upon them, as the foretaste of worse evil to come, as the first drops of that cup of bitterness which they were destined to drink to the dregs. The prescience of our Lord would no doubt contemplate them in each of these lights; but the records of contemporary history, perhaps, may enable us to verify the fact of their occurrence, as serving the latter purpose, rather than the former: that is to say, the actual instances of such events, as confirmed by historical testimony, may fall out nearer to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem itself, than further off from it. It is probable, that as penal dispensations and fulfilling a vindictive purpose, such visitations would become most numerous and considerable, and consequently most likely to attract notice, as the time of the end approached; for it is not to be supposed that the hand of God, having once begun the work of retribution, would grow slack as the period of the consummation drew nigh; or that the Providence which had employed its means of penal agency, natural or moral, in resentment of the wickedness of the times, at various periods before, would check the career of its judgments, and suppress the indications of its anger, towards the last, as that wickedness grew daily more rife, and daily more worthy of punishment.

To proceed, then, to the particular consideration of the signs of these several classes; and first, of those of the third class: "Nation shall be stirred up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." On the terms in which this prediction is expressed, we might build certain conclusions with respect to the nature of the event predicted, which would be

found to be confirmed by the matter of fact. The words "nation against nation," (*ἔθνος ἐπὶ ἔθνος*), might evidently be assumed to denote people of one race, in opposition to those of another; such as the Gentile in contradistinction to the Jew. Had they been intended of nations akin to each other in extraction and denomination, as one description of Gentiles in opposition to another, we might have expected to find them expressed by *ἔθνη ἐπὶ ἔθνη*, or *τὰ ἔθνη ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη*; Gentile against Gentile, the nations against the nations. Not to mention, that nothing which was to affect Gentiles exclusively, nothing which they in particular might do to one another, or suffer from one another, could be expected to concern the Jews, or to interest the Hebrew Christians, as something in the effects of which their unbelieving countrymen were specially included.

There is, in the peculiar phraseology of this passage, a very perceptible analogy to the following text of Isaiah, xix. 2: "And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom," or as the margin has it, "Nome against Nome;" wherein the matter of fact predicted is manifestly not the breaking out of wars between the Egyptians, as one independent community of the ancient world, and any other people, distinct from them; but of commotions, disturbances, and misunderstandings between the Egyptians themselves, between one part of the same Egyptian community and another, one division of the same country of Egypt and another; which commotions and disturbances would amount properly to civil or intestine war. Something of the

same kind, it might be presumed, was meant in the present instance, by the stirring up of nation against nation, and of kingdom against kingdom; the division of one part of the same community against another, the rising up of one district or integral portion of the same country against another—like that of one of the Nomes of ancient Egypt against the rest. The word, too, which is rendered by *rise*, in the authorized version, and more literally according to the version which we have adopted, by *stirred up*, (*ἐγερθήσεται*;) may much more fitly be understood of the fact of a popular outbreak, of violence and outrage, the effect of tumultuary commotion and sudden excitement, than of regular warfare, its causes, characteristics, or effects.

The first part of this prediction, therefore, and the first mentioned event in this class of signs, I apprehend requires to be understood of those scenes of turbulence, insurrection, sedition, and bloodshed, in which Jew as such, should hereafter be seen engaged promiscuously with Gentile as such. First, because this was a sign of universal prevalence, and equal notoriety. It might be witnessed in Judæa, and out of Judæa; by the eyes of Hebrew Christians, and by those of Christians of any denomination. Secondly, because it was a sign which began to be visible early, and continued to be visible to the last. Thirdly, because it was in all cases a sign, the essence of which consisted in the conflict of opposite national distinctions, or opposite religious denominations. The moving cause to these ebullitions of mutual violence, was always either a determination on the side of one of the contending parties to obtain exclusive possession of some city, before occupied by

them in conjunction, or some palpable affront, offered by the Gentiles to the religious prejudices of the Jews. Fourthly, because it was truly a surprising spectacle, to become visible so suddenly, and in so many places, which those disputes occasioned; when they who had so long been living in amity and concord, within the precincts of a common city, under the same government, enjoying equal rights and privileges which had never before been supposed to clash, connected by the ties of neighbourhood, and by all those bonds of endearment or advantage which in the ordinary intercourse of society, knit man to man—were seen all at once, like bodies ill-assorted, and instinctively repugnant to their union, breaking loose from each other, to commence an intestine warfare, of a worse than civil nature—which neither the authority of the laws, nor the interposition of the military power, nothing but the destruction or expulsion of one of the contending parties, could avail to suspend or terminate. There was no quarter of the habitable world, especially within the dominions of the Roman empire, where Jews had not long been living among Gentiles; and there were numerous quarters in Judæa where Gentiles had long been living among Jews: and there was scarcely any either within Judæa, or without it, where they were living in conjunction, that did not witness in its turn such contests as these, between the Jewish and the Gentile inhabitants of the place; where the hand of the Jew was not turned against his fellow-citizen the Gentile, nor the hand of the Gentile against his fellow-citizen the Jew: where, like wild beasts brought up in the same den, having once yielded to the instincts of a common ferocity, and tasted of each

other's blood, they were not incapable of being kept from longing for it again, in a constant state of excitement against each other, for which no better cause could be assigned, but the wildfire of contagion, the influence of example, the spread of such disturbances from city to city, merely because one moiety of the inhabitants were Jews, and the remainder Gentiles. Fifthly, because, notwithstanding the heat and fury with which these disputes were carried on upon both sides, when once begun, the Gentiles were commonly the aggressors, and sought the quarrel; calling in question rights of the Jews, which had never been challenged before, and to which their claim was clear; and in order to their maintenance and preservation, driving them to arms, whether they wished it or not: a circumstance which appears like the agency of a special providence, purposely influencing the passions of men contrary to their usual course, to carry some design of its own into effect. Sixthly, because the result of these numerous contests, unprovoked as they were, was in almost every instance much more disastrous to the Jews, than to their adversaries; in which distinction of the effect too, we may perceive the hand of a providence, not only stirring up adversaries against them, but cooperating with their enemies, and fighting on their side, and by the repetition, as well as the magnitude of such chastisements, from time to time inflicted, drawing the attention of observers the more forcibly to them, and giving them in themselves so much the more of power and significance, to serve for the purpose of signs of worse of the same kind to come, both inflicted on the same description of subjects, the Jews, and by the instru-

mentality of the same description of agents, the Gentiles. Lastly, because any interpretation of the words in question, which would make them a prophecy to foretell the rise of wars among one nation of the ancient world, on a large scale, and another, in the interval between the Ascension, and the destruction of Jerusalem—or between the Jews, as one such community, and the rest, for the same period of their history—would be false in point of fact. There was no instance of any war of that description, prior to the rupture between the Jews and the Roman government, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem itself, and happened too late in the period, to serve the purpose of a sign; besides being the very event which every sign beforehand enumerated, was designed specially to forebode and usher in^u.

^u Of the disputes in question, the fact of which I consider to be intended by the prediction in the present instance, the earliest examples, which the intermediate history, from the time of the delivery of the prophecy to the commencement of the Jewish war, will be found to supply, I apprehend to be the three following; at Alexandria in Egypt, at Seleucia upon the Tigris, in Upper Asia, and at Jamnia in Phœnicia. The precise date of each of these it is necessary to determine with so much the more exactness, because we shall find hereafter that the time of the commencement of the persecution of the Hebrew church by the Jews of Judæa, is placed *before* the fact of any of these occurrences: in which respect, too, it will appear that the coincidence between the prophecy and the actual order of events, is as remarkable as in any thing of the kind, which might be specified.

The beginning and progress of the dispute between the Jews and the Greeks, both the inhabitants of Alexandria, is related with great circumstantiality of detail, by an eyewitness, Philo Judæus, in his two extant treatises, *Contra Flaccum*, (Operr. ii. 517,)

The discovery of the true meaning of the first part of this prediction, "Nation shall be stirred up

and De Virtutibus (ibid. 545). It took its rise in the last year of the administration of the Roman Procurator of Egypt, for the time being, Flaccus Aquilius; which, as I endeavoured to shew in my former work, was U. C. 791. A. D. 38, in the second of Caius Cæsar, (Diss. vol. i. Diss. xi. 425, 426. Supplementary Diss. page 401, 402.) its commencement coinciding with the summer quarter of that year, its termination with the recall and banishment of Flaccus, about the usual period of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles; that is, the beginning of the autumnal quarter, in the same.

Nor can there be any doubt, that both in its causes and its effects, this incident was such as to answer to the description in the prophecy. It began with a proposal of the enemies of the Jews to erect *εἰκόνας*, statues or images of the Roman emperor, in the proseuchæ, or synagogues of that people, (Philo ii. 523. 21. 525. 5.) This was followed by an edict of the governor's, disfranchising the Jewish population of the city, or depriving them of the civil privileges which they had heretofore enjoyed (ibid. 525. 13); and that, soon after, by another, authorizing any that were so inclined, to treat them openly as enemies, (ibid. 525. 19.)

The effects of these measures were truly calamitous to the Jews. From the two, out of the five divisions or quarters of the city, which they previously occupied by themselves, they were dislodged, and driven into a corner of one, or compelled to seek shelter wherever they could, upon the sea shore, or in the dunghills, or among the tombs without the city. Their houses were attacked and rifled; their shops broken open, and their property plundered or confiscated. More than four hundred houses were thus emptied or destroyed; the inhabitants of which, expelled from their homes, were left to perish with hunger, or if they appeared in the city in quest of food, were treated as enemies, and beaten or stoned to death. Many were crucified by command of Flaccus; against the rest, the fury of the populace was permitted to rage without the least restraint from him. The unfortunate Jews were scourged and put to torture in the theatres, for the amusement of the multitude;

“against nation,” prepares the way for the better understanding of the matter of fact foretold in the

thirty-eight of the members of the sanhedrim, or municipal government, which Augustus Cæsar had granted them as a special privilege (see my *Supplem. Diss.* p. 428, 429. Cf. *Diss.* vol. i. *Diss.* xiii. 559, &c.), were forcibly dragged from their homes into public, stripped naked in the presence of the people, and so severely scourged that many of them expired under the blows. Fire and sword, all the atrocities in short of open warfare, were permitted to their enemies against them with impunity, and even their dead bodies were denied the rites of burial. Their women were dragged from their retirement, and compelled to eat swine’s flesh, or exposed to the most exquisite sufferings. Many other particulars, to the like effect, will be found recorded by Philo (ii. 523. 18—531. 28).

The close of this persecution, by the arrest of Flaccus, and his deportation from Egypt into banishment, was the beginning of the autumnal quarter of U. C. 791. A. D. 38, after it had continued at least for the whole of the preceding summer. It is thus described by Philo, 534. 13; *ἐναργῆς δὲ πίστις καὶ ὁ χρόνος τῆς συλλήψεως*· ἑορτὴ μὲν γὰρ ἦν πάνδημος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις κατὰ τὴν μεσοπωρινὴν ἰσημερινῶν, ἐν ἣ διαγίεν Ἰουδαίοις ἕθος ἐν σκηναῖς. This feast the Jews were celebrating as well as they could, or dared, at the time, in fear and apprehension, in sorrow and silence, when news was brought to them that the messengers of Caius had arrested their enemy, which turned their sorrow into joy; *πάνυχοι (sic) δὲ διατελέσαντες ἐν ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς, καὶ ἅμα τῇ ἕφ διὰ πυλῶν ἐκχυθέντες ἐπὶ τοὺς πλησίον αἰγιαλοὺς ἀφικνούνται*· τὰς γὰρ προσευχὰς ἀφήρητο (ib. 535. 1); and there returned thanks to God for their deliverance.

Though Philo does not mention the actual amount of the loss of life, or of property, which the Jews sustained from all this violence, yet if his description of their treatment is not greatly exaggerated—there can be no doubt that in both respects it must have been considerable. It is evident from his account, that in the present instance his countrymen were entirely passive, and neither gave any provocation to the hostilities exercised against them, nor offered any resistance to their assailants; a circumstance which deserves to be specially remarked. It is

second, "Kingdom *shall be stirred up* against kingdom." An event coupled with the other in the

also worthy of notice, that speaking of the first in this series of outrages upon the Jews, the meditated erection of statues in their proseuchæ, Philo observes that Flaccus, while giving his consent to that measure in Alexandria, was well aware that he was endangering the peace not only of that city, and the rest of Egypt, in particular, but of the whole empire; *ἅπασαν δλίγον δεῖν φάναι, τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐμφυλίων πολέμων ἐπλήρωσεν*: ii. 523. 41. The example set in Alexandria, of so public and glaring an affront to the civil privileges, and the religious scruples of the Jews, would be followed in all Egypt, and in every part of the east and the west; *καὶ δέος ἦν, μὴ οἱ πανταχοῦ τὴν ἀφορμὴν ἐκείθεν λαβόντες, ἐπηρέαζωσι τοῖς πολίταις αὐτῶν Ἰουδαίοις, εἰς τὰς Προσευχὰς καὶ τὰ πάτρια νεωτερίζοντες*: ii. 524. 14. There was no city nor nation, where Jews might not be found settled, and living promiscuously among Gentiles; there was none, which, with such a precedent as that of Alexandria before its eyes, might not be encouraged to the commission of similar outrages; and there was none, where the Jews themselves, however desirous of peace, and disposed to pay all due submission to their civil superiors, were not prepared to endure a thousand deaths, rather than see their religion insulted with impunity, and their places of worship desecrated.

The violence of this persecution was checked for the time by the removal of Flaccus; but the dispute between the Jewish and the Grecian inhabitants of the city, relating to the right of the former to their civil franchises, was not put an end to by that event. The further progress of this particular controversy is narrated by Philo in his work *De Virtutibus, or De Legatione ad Caium*, before referred to; as well as by Josephus, in his *Antiquities*, xviii. viii. 1. and *Contra Apionem*, ii. 3. This account begins with U. C. 793. A. D. 40. *incunte*; and of the method of reconciling the several narratives with each other, I said enough in my former work, vol. i. Diss. iv. App. iii. 239—244. (Cf. Supplem. Diss. 378, 379.) Nor was it finally settled, for the present, before the accession of Claudius; by whom, in the first year of his reign, U. C. 794. A. D. 41. at the intercession of Herod Agrippa, and Herod of Chalcis, two

prediction, would in all probability turn out to be analogous to it in the fulfilment; and with some-

edicts were issued, one, confirming the Jews in the possession of their ancient privileges in Alexandria, the other, doing the same for them in the rest of the empire: *Ant. Jud.* xix. v. 2, 3. Before this, it is observable, the Jews of Alexandria, having taken courage on the death of Caius, were prepared to have asserted their rights by force of arms.

The next instance of a contest, analogous to this between the Jews and the Greeks of Alexandria, is that which Josephus records to have happened at Seleucia, in Upper Asia, *Ant. Jud.* xviii. ix. 8, 9: either synchronously with this at Alexandria, or but a little later than it. Between the parts beyond the Euphrates and Jerusalem, a constant intercourse was kept up by the resort of the Jews from those quarters to the feasts; and notwithstanding that the distance of Seleucia from the mother country might be much greater than that of Alexandria, there is no doubt the Jews of Judæa would hear alike of what befell their brethren in either place, and would take an equal interest in their fortunes, good or bad, in both.

The calamity which is thus recorded to have happened to the Jewish population of Seleucia, arose ultimately out of a prior fact, the migration thither of the Jews of Babylon, or of the region round about it, called Babylonia: the cause of which is traced downwards by Josephus through the previous history of Asinæus and Anilæus, two Jews of Nearda, a neighbouring city; who, though of an obscure origin, yet, having betaken themselves to the trade of robbers and freebooters, by their talents, their daring, and their success, acquired power sufficient to set at defiance the Parthian satraps, and to become undisputed masters of the surrounding country; so much so that Artabanus, who was king of Parthia at the time, thought it more expedient to conciliate the brothers, by appointing them satraps of Babylonia, than to attempt their reduction by force. (*Jos. Ant. Jud.* xviii. ix. 3, 4.)

In the possession of this government they continued fifteen years; when one of the brothers, Asinæus, was poisoned by the wife of the other, Anilæus, a Parthian lady, whom Anilæus had

thing perceptibly different from it, would combine something perceptibly akin to it also. Wars between

taken by force of arms from her husband ; but whose marriage with him, because she was not of the same nation, and was also an idolatress, gave offence to Asinæus and the rest of the Jews : Joseph. *loc. cit.* and §. 5. The death of Asinæus was soon followed by that of Anilæus ; whom the native Babylonians surprised in his retreat, and killed. This, we may presume, was not earlier than the sixteenth year of his government.

Upon the death of Anilæus, his countrymen the Jews, who had hitherto been masters of the native Babylonians, beginning, in their turn, to be oppressed by them, were compelled to retire in a body to Seleucia, for the sake of protection and security. The inhabitants of this city consisted partly of Syrians, and partly of Greeks ; between whom there had always been a jealousy and bad understanding, though the Greeks, from superiority of numbers, had commonly maintained the ascendancy. The accession of the Jews gave a preponderance of power and influence to the Syrians. For five years after their arrival, the new comers remained unmolested ; but in the sixth, the Greeks persuaded the Syrians to renounce their present allies, and to make common cause with themselves ; and as an earnest of their mutual sincerity, to join them in an unexpected attack upon the Jews.

The consequence of this league was, that more than fifty thousand of the Jews were killed, and the survivors compelled to retreat to the neighbouring town of Ctesiphon. Nor were they safe even there ; for a general spirit of hostility against the Jews, had suddenly seized on the whole of the surrounding country, and pursued them wherever they went : *ἐφοβίθη δὲ καὶ πᾶν τὸ τῆδε Ἰουδαίων γένος τοὺς τε Βαβυλωνίους, καὶ τοὺς Σελευκείας· ἐπειδὴ καὶ ὅποσον ἦν Σύρων ἐμπολιτεῦον τοῖς τόποις, ταῦτόν ἔλεγον τοῖς Σελευκείσιν ἐπὶ πολέμῳ τῷ πρὸς Ἰουδαίους.* They were forced, therefore, to take refuge collectively in such places as Nisibis and Nearda ; which were both strong and well-peopled, and more under the acknowledged dominion of the Parthian government than Seleucia : xviii. ix. 8, 9.

It thus appears that the Jews of Upper Asia had begun by this time, to be as little secure from molestation as those of

the kingdom or kingdoms of Judæa, (had there been any such, for the period of time embraced by

Egypt; or as we shall by and by see, as those of Syria and Phœnicia. With regard to the precise date of the attack made upon them in Seleucia, two things appear from the account of Josephus; first, that Artabanus was king of Parthia all through the government of the two brothers; secondly, that Seleucia had not begun to be besieged by his son and successor Bardanes, at the time of the destruction of the Jews. We may collect from Tacitus, Ann. ii. 3, 4. that Artabanus was made king of Parthia, U. C. 769, or U. C. 768. at the earliest; and I shewed in my former work, (vol. i. Diss. xiii. 567, 568. Cf. Supplem. Diss. 429, 430.) that he must have died, and Seleucia have begun to be besieged, U. C. 791. A. D. 38.

It follows therefore that Artabanus reigned twenty-two or twenty-three years in all; and we have seen that from the appointment of the two brothers, by him, to be satraps of Babylonia, to the destruction of the Jews in Seleucia, there was an interval of twenty-one years also. This coincidence renders it extremely probable, that they were appointed in the first year of Artabanus, and the destruction of their countrymen took place in his last. There was a short interval, U. C. 790 or 791. during which Artabanus was deposed from his throne; until he was restored by the aid of Izates, king of Adiabene: see my former work, *loc. cit.* I am of opinion, that the attack upon the Jews of Seleucia took place in this interregnum, or immediately after Artabanus' restoration. The place which Josephus assigns to it is a clear proof that it belongs to the reign of Caius; and happened sometime between its beginning, March 16, U. C. 790. A. D. 37. and its end, January 24, U. C. 794. A. D. 41.

The next instance of the disputes in question is supplied by the history of Jamnia, a city on the sea-coast of Judæa, between Gath, or Gitta, and Joppa. A contest there between the Jews and the Gentiles, would come home to the observation of the Jews of Judæa, and be close at their own doors. We gather the fact of such a contention, in that quarter, about this time, from the testimony of Philo Judæus, in his same work, *De Virtutibus*, ii. 575. 13. sqq.: and though it does not appear that it pro-

this part of the prophecy,) and the neighbouring kingdoms, lying apart from Judæa, would not have

ceeded to the length of actual violence or bloodshed, yet as an instance of unprovoked aggression on the part of the Gentiles, and as a deliberate attack upon the religious prejudices of the Jews, it is as much to the point as any thing that has yet been mentioned. The date of this occurrence must have been U. C. 792. A. D. 39. *exeunte*, or U. C. 793. A. D. 40. *incunte*; as it is related early in Philo's account of what passed at the audience, which he and his brother deputies experienced from Caius, at Rome, on occasion of the Legatio in question; the time of which audience was the spring quarter of U. C. 793. A. D. 40: see my former work, *loc. cit.*

Speaking of the motives, which induced Caius to insist upon the erection of his statue in the temple of Jerusalem, Philo continues, *loc. cit.*: “And now he is more than ever exasperated by
 “ a letter, which Capito has sent him. Capito is the collector of
 “ the tributes of Judæa, and on no good terms with the people
 “ of the country. He came among them a poor man; but by
 “ dint of pilfering and peculation, unperceived, he has amassed
 “ various kinds of wealth.” *Ἔτα εὐλαβηθεῖς*, continues he, *μή τις αὐτοῦ γένηται κατηγορία, τέχνην ἐπένοήσεν, ἣ διαβολαῖς τῶν ἀδικηθέντων διακρούσεται τὰς αἰτίας. ἀφορμὴν δὲ αὐτῷ δίδωσιν εἰς ὕπερ ἐβούλετο, συντύχια τις τοιαύτη. τὴν Ἰάμνειαν πόλιν δὲ ἐστὶ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ταῖς μάλιστα πολυάνθρωπος· ταύτην μυγάδες οἰκοῦσιν, οἱ πλείους μὲν Ἰουδαῖοι, ἕτεροι δὲ τινες ἀλλόφυλοι, παρεισφθαρέντες ἀπὸ τῶν πλησιοχώρων, οἱ τοῖς τρόποι τινὰ αὐθιγενέσιν, ὄντες μέτοικοι, κακὰ καὶ πράγματα παρέχουσιν, αἰεὶ τι παραλύοντες τῶν πατρῶν Ἰουδαίους. οὗτοι παρὰ τῶν ἐπιφοιτώντων ἀκούοντες ὄση σπουδῇ κέχρηται Γαῖος περὶ τὴν ἰδίαν ἐκθέωσιν, καὶ ὡς ἀλλοτριώτατα διάκειται πρὸς ἅπαν τὸ Ἰουδαϊκὸν γένος, καιρὸν ἐπιτήδειον εἰς ἐπίθεσιν παραπεπτωκέαι νομίζοντες, αὐτοσχέδιον ἀνιστώσει βωμὸν εἰκαιστάτης ὕλης· πηλὸν σχηματίσαντες εἰς πλίνθους, ὑπὲρ τοῦ μόνου ἐπιβουλεύειν τοῖς συνοικοῦσιν· ἤδεσαν γὰρ οὐκ ἀνεξομένους καταλνομένων τῶν ἐθῶν, ὕπερ καὶ ἐγένετο. θεασάμενοι γὰρ, καὶ δυσανασχέτησαντες ἐπὶ τῷ τῆς ἱερᾶς χώρας τὸ ἱεροπρεπὲς ὄντως ἀφανίζεσθαι, καθαιροῦσι συνελθόντες. οἱ δὲ εὐθύς ἐπὶ τὸν Καπίωνα ἤκον, ὃς ἦν τοῦ δράματος ὄλου δημιουργός. ἔρμαιον δὲ εὐρηκέαι νομίσας, ὅπερ ἐκ πολλῶν χρόνων ἀνεξήτει, γράφει Γαῖῳ, διαίρων τὰ πράγματα, καὶ μετεωρίζων.*

The consequence of this representation was, according to

answered to that description—if Jews in this instance are supposed to be at war with Gentiles, as much

Philo, that acting by the advice of two of his councillors, Helico, an Egyptian, and Apelles, an Ascalonian, Caius gave orders that instead of the altar of brick, or clay, which had been raised to him, in Jamnia, as if in contempt, a colossal statue, covered with gold, should be set up to him in the temple at Jerusalem. Ἀσκαλωνίταις δὲ, says Philo, ii. 576. 18. (Cf. Joseph. Bell. Jud. iii. ii. 1) ἀσύμβατός τις καὶ ἀκατάλλακτος δυσμένεια πρὸς τοὺς τῆς ἱερᾶς χώρας οἰκίτορας Ἰουδαίους ἔστιν, οὖσιν ὁμόροις.

With respect to the populousness of Jamnia, Philo is confirmed by Strabo, xvi. ii. 28: and as to the length of time that Capito had been in office, as fiscal procurator, Josephus informs us (Ant. Jud. xviii. vi. 3.) that Herennius Capito was procurator of Jamnia, when Herod Agrippa arrived there, on his way to Rome; that is, as I shewed in my former work, (vol. i. Diss. viii. App. 309—316. Cf. Supplem. Diss. 387, 388.) U. C. 784. A. D. 31.

After the minute consideration of the above three instances, with regard to time, place, and circumstances, it will suffice simply to enumerate in their order, the further occasions of the same kind of strife, or violence, which are yet to be found on record, before the commencement of the Jewish war. I shall regard, however, as such an instance, every example of a deliberate outrage on the religious scruples or observances of the Jews—as calculated to provoke to acts of violence and retaliation on their part, whether it was followed by such an effect or not.

First, then, Ant. Jud. xviii. vi. 3. (Cf. Contra Apion. ii. 9.) some young men of Dora, a city on the sea-coast, at the southern extremity of Syrophœnicia, U. C. 795. A. D. 42, set up a statue of Claudius Cæsar, in the synagogue of the Jews; which led to a formal complaint against them from Herod Agrippa, to Petronius, the governor of Syria for the time being, and gave occasion to an edict of his, in which he sharply rebuked such outrages.

Ant. Jud. xix. ix. 1: U. C. 796. A. D. 43, immediately on the death of Herod Agrippa, the people of Cæsarea Augusta, and of Sebaste, (the ancient Samaria,) were guilty of the grossest

as in the other. Wars between one foreign nation or kingdom, and another, both alike external to

insults towards his memory; no doubt out of hatred to every thing Jewish, for his scrupulous attachment to which this king had been very remarkable, Ant. Jud. xix. vi. 1. 3; vii. 3.

Ant. Jud. xx. v. 3; B. ii. xii. 1: U. C. 802. A. D. 49, in the administration of Cumanus, a gross act of indecency committed by a Roman soldier, to express his contempt for the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, created a disturbance at the passover, in which twenty thousand Jews lost their lives. Ant. Jud. xx. v. 4; B. ii. xii. 2: not long after, in the course of the same year, a copy of the Law, being found in a certain village, near Bethoron, by a Roman soldier, was torn by him and burnt. This outrage also excited a disturbance among the Jews, which could be appeased only by the execution of the offender.

Ant. Jud. xx. viii. 7; B. ii. xiii. 7: U. C. 809 or 810. A. D. 56 or 54, under the government of Felix, the Jews and the Syrians or Greeks of Cæsarea, began to dispute which had exclusively the right to the possession of the place, or to the greater share of political preponderance therein. The dispute so begun, proceeded to violence and bloodshed on both sides, and was only appeased for the present by the soldiers of Felix, who slew many of the Jews, and sacked their houses.

Ant. Jud. xx. viii. 9: U. C. 819. A. D. 66, in the administration of Gessius Florus, the Gentile inhabitants of Cæsarea, obtained from Nero, by the interest of a person whom Josephus calls Burrhus, and Zonaras, vi. 16. 289. B. in the parallel place of his annals, though obviously copying from Josephus, calls Beryllus, his *παιδαγωγός* and Greek secretary, (and in any case, a very different person from Burrhus, the well-known captain of the prætorian guard, who was then dead: Cf. Ant. Jud. xx. viii. 2, where the latter is described by his proper title,) a decree in their favour exclusively; and consequently depriving the Jews of the rights of citizenship. This decision contributed mainly to the breaking out of the war, by its manifest injustice, and the spirit of retaliation which it provoked on the part of the Jews. We learn, indeed, from the war, ii. xiii. 7, that the dispute had been referred to Nero, at the time of the suppression of the first disturbance, U. C. 809 or 810, towards the close of the

Judæa, for the period in question, (even if the fact of such contests were historically true,) would have

government of Felix. The deputies might go to Rome, U. C. 811 or 812, in the time of Festus; but it is clear, from the War, ii. xiv. 4, that they did not return, with the final decree of Nero, until the month Artemisius, April or May, U. C. 819; so that the decision of the question must have been protracted, by various means, all that time. Soon after the reception of the decree, an insult publicly offered at Cæsarea, to the Law and to the synagogue of the Jews, led to a contest on the sabbath day; which ended in the Jews being compelled to leave the city, and carry their books of the Law to Nabata, six miles from Cæsarea: Bell. *loc. cit.* §. 4, 5.

From this time forward, when the end was so much nearer, the fact of such disputes between the Jewish and the Gentile inhabitants of particular places, attended with the most fatal consequences to the former, becomes more and more frequent of occurrence. Thus, U. C. 819. A. D. 66. on the very day, upon which the faction of the zealots in Jerusalem, contrary to the faith of oaths, put to the sword the Roman garrison, commanded by Metilius—which day was a sabbath, and as the context proves, a sabbath coincident with Gorpæus 12. (August 21.)—the people of Cæsarea rose upon the Jews, slew more than twenty thousand of them, and expelled the rest. The Jews, inflamed to madness by the news of this aggression, retaliated with fire and sword upon all the cities and villages, Syrian or Greek, which were within their reach; Philadelphia, Gerasa, Pella, Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippos, Cedasa, Ptolemais, Gaba, Cæsarea, Sebaste, Ascalon, Gaza, Anthedon: B. ii. xviii. 1: (Cf. xvii. 10.)

Between the rage of the contending parties, observes Josephus, ii. xviii. 2: *δεινὴ ὄλην τὴν Συρίαν ἐπέσχε παραχῆ, καὶ πῦσα πόλις εἰς δύο διήρητο στρατόπεδα. σωτηρία δὲ τοῖς ἐτέροις ἦν τὸ τοὺς ἐτέρουσ φθῆσαι . . . προῦκαλεῖτο δὲ ἐπὶ τὰς σφαγὰς τῶν διαφόρων καὶ τοὺς πάλαι πρασιότους εἶναι δοκοῦντας ἢ πλεονεξία: τὰς γὰρ οὐσίας τῶν ἀνααιρεθέντων ἀδεῶς διήρπαζον, καὶ καθάπερ ἐκ παρατάξεως τὰ σκύλα τῶν ἀνηρημένων εἰς τοὺς σφετέρους οἴκους μετέφερον . . . ἦν δὲ ἰδεῖν τὰς πόλεις μεστὰς ἀτάφων σωμάτων, καὶ νεκρὸν ἅμι νηπίους γέροντας ἔρριμμένους, γύναιά τε μήτε τῆς ἐπ' αἰδῶ σκέπης μετελιηφότα. κ', τ. λ.*

been equally irrelevant, where Gentile was opposed to Gentile, and the Jew was alike unconcerned in

In this way, B. ii. xviii. 3, 4. Vita 6. the people of Scythopolis, and B. ii. xviii. 5. the people of Ascalon, Ptolemais, Tyre, Hippos, and Gadara, and ii. xx. 2. (Cf. vii. viii. 7. p. 1114.) the people of Damascus, got rid of their Jewish fellow-inhabitants, sparing neither women nor children, rising upon them in each instance suddenly, and as we are told in the Vita, cap. 6 : οὐδέ μίαν αὐτοῖς αἰτίαν ἐπικαλεῖν ἔχοντες. οὔτε γὰρ ἐπὶ Ῥωμαίων ἀποστάσει νεώτερόν τι πεφρονήκεσαν, οὔτε πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐκείνους ἐχθρὸν ἢ ἐπίβουλον. The numbers who perished on these several occasions, are specified either particularly or generally, by the historian. Among them, the most remarkable cases were those of Scythopolis (the ancient Bethshan) and Damascus : the Jews of the former being massacred by the Gentile inhabitants, though they had espoused their part, and fought on their side, against their own countrymen ; the Jews of the latter being destroyed by the Damascenes, vii. viii. 7. p. 1114. μηδὲ πρόφασιν εὐλογοῦν πλάσαι δυναθέντων, and in effecting their murderous purpose, obliged to take as much precaution to conceal their intentions from their own wives, (ἀπάσας, πλὴν ὀλίγων, ὑπηγμένας τῇ Ἰουδαϊκῇ θρησκείᾳ, B. ii. xx. 2,) as from the victims of their treachery.

On the other hand, the Jews of Tiberias not less cruelly and treacherously destroyed, in the course of the same year, the Greek or Gentile inhabitants of their city : Vita Josephi, 12.

As Alexandria in Egypt was among the first to set the example of these unnatural contests of the inhabitants of the same places, with each other ; so is it one of the last to bring up the catalogue of such conflicts, and to close the account of their destructive effects to the Jews. This same year, U. C. 819. A. D. 66. and as the context of the narrative in Josephus implies, either in the month Gorpizæus (August), or in Hyperberetæus (September), the Jews sustained there the loss of fifty, if not of sixty, thousand of their body, at the hands of the Alexandrines, assisted by the Roman soldiers. The provocation which led to this catastrophe, was given by the Alexandrines ; though the fury with which the Jews resented it, and the violence to which their anger was preparing to proceed, left the Roman governor, Tiberius Alexander, no alternative but to interfere by force of arms,

what might happen to either. Still more irrelevant would it be to interpret the prediction of the civil

and put an end to the disturbance in that way : B. Jud. ii. xviii. 7, 8 ; vii. viii. 7. 1114.

Before we take leave of this subject, it is proper to observe, that some cities there were, mentioned by Josephus, which did not follow the example set them by the rest, even to disturb, much less to butcher their Jewish townsmen—ii. xviii. 5: *μόνοι δὲ Ἀντιοχείς, says he, καὶ Σιδώνιοι, καὶ Ἀπαμείς, ἐφείσαντο τῶν μετοικούντων, καὶ οὐκ ἀνελεῖν τινα τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὑπέμειναν, οὔτε δῆσαι. τάχα μὲν καὶ διὰ τὸ σφέτερον πλῆθος ὑπερορῶντες αὐτῶν πρὸς τὰ κινήματα, τὸ πλεόν δὲ, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, οἴκτω πρὸς οὓς οὐδὲν ἑώρων νεωτερίζοντας. Γερασηνοὶ δὲ οὔτε εἰς τοὺς ἐμμεινάντας ἐπλημμέλησαν, καὶ τοὺς ἐξελθεῖν ἐβελήσαντας προέπεμψαν μέχρι τῶν ὄρων.*

Whether the first of the reasons, assigned by Josephus to account for this difference of conduct towards the Jews, in these places, compared with others, be true or not ; we may justly consider the distinction itself, in all probability a providential dispensation in behalf of the Christian Jews. Gerasa was a city in the dominions of Agrippa the younger, in which the Zoar was destined to be, where the church of Jerusalem, for this period of trouble and danger to the rest of their countrymen, was to find protection and security from the common risk. Sidon, Apamea, and Antioch, no doubt contained among their population as large a proportion of Christians, as any city out of Judæa ; and especially Antioch. It cannot be necessary to remind the reader, that Christianity, at this early period, was scarcely distinguishable from Judaism, or at least that Christians as such were still liable to be confounded with Jews. The providence of God in behalf of the Jewish inhabitants of Antioch, in particular, was not only remarkably displayed at this critical juncture, but also at a later period, after the commencement of the war, and after the destruction of Jerusalem itself ; U. C. 821. A. D. 68. and U. C. 823. A. D. 70 : B. vii. iii. 2—4 ; v. 2 : Cf. Ant. Jud. xii. iii. 1. A false accusation of the rest by one of their own number, Antiochus, the son of the Ethnarch or archon (the municipal governor) of the Jews, himself, exposed their lives and their property to a double risk ; once, when they were charged by him

wars, which should take place in course of time between the successive competitors for the Roman purple; Nero and Galba; Galba and Otho; Otho and Vitellius; Vitellius and Vespasian: for those too were the contests of Gentiles with Gentiles, and not strictly speaking of one kingdom against another, but of the same kingdom against itself; in the event of which too, the Jews were no more interested than any other portion of the empire, the whole whereof must alike follow in the train of the victorious party; the fact of which also did not begin to be verified until a year and an half after the commencement of the Jewish rebellion, and therefore could not possibly be a sign beforehand of any such event as the beginning of that visitation.

The matter of fact which I apprehend to be properly contemplated in the fulfilment of this prediction, is the occurrence of insurrectionary wars between one part of Judæa itself, and another; both, as distinct and independent communities compre-

with having conceived the design of burning down the city in a single night, and again, when, some incendiaries having actually set fire to the archives, the chambers of records, and the public courts, or basilicæ, this crime also was by the same Antiochus, fastened on the Jews. Mucian, who was governor of Syria for the time being, protected them from the popular outcry, on the first of these occasions; and Cneus Collegas, the legate of Cæsenius Pætus, in his absence, interposed for the same purpose, on the second. Nor though Titus Cæsar himself was twice at Antioch, after the destruction of Jerusalem, once, on his way to the banks of the Euphrates, and again, on his return to Egypt; could he be prevailed upon by the importunity either of the senate or of the people, even to remove the tables of brass, on which were inscribed the privileges granted at different times, to the Jews of Antioch; much less to expel them, and their families from the city.

hended in the same locality. The mention of kingdom as opposed to kingdom, like that of Nome as opposed to Nome, in the parallel passage of Isaiah, points in this instance to the ancient division of Palestine, into the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel, respectively; and to the revival of something like the old rivalry and hostility which from the moment of their separation had ever after distinguished these kingdoms. The representative of the kingdom of Judah at the present day, was Judæa Proper, the two Galilees, Peræa, and their inhabitants; that of the ancient kingdom of Israel, was Samaria and its inhabitants. The rising up of one kingdom against another, in the sense here implied—is by no means a necessary intimation of the fact of open or regular warfare, between them; or of any thing more than in the former instance, mere sudden outbreaks of a common violence, and mutual tumultuary outrage. Contests of this description, in which Jew was expressly engaged with Samaritan, are on record for the interval between the Ascension, and the destruction of Jerusalem; to which I consider this prediction properly to relate. These disputes had something in their nature akin to, and something different from the last mentioned ones; sufficient to make them be classed together, and yet to distinguish them asunder. The Jews and Samaritans lived in the same country indeed, but not in immediate conjunction; as the Jews and Gentiles should be doing, when they should go to war, as supposed in the former instance. The Samaritans contained a mixture of the blood of the ancient Israelites; and therefore their contests with the Jews could not be called the rivalry of

names or nationalities, so properly as those of the Gentiles; nor yet, as both professed an equal obedience to the Law of Moses, so properly a war of opposite religions. Still, as being the fruit of long cherished ill-will, the consequence partly of national and partly of religious antipathies, they agreed with the contentions waged between the Jew and the Gentile, in the spirit in which they originated, and in the consequences to which they led. They agreed too, in being commonly alike unprovoked on the part of the Jews, in being carried on with the same rancour and animosity on both sides, and in being equally matter of notoriety and general history ^x.

^x Not only the interval between the time of the delivery of this prophecy, U. C. 783. A. D. 30. and the time of the commencement of the Jewish war, U. C. 819. A. D. 66. but even, between the birth of our Saviour, U. C. 750. B. C. 4. and the same time, may be called a period of comparative general, public and private tranquillity; especially as contrasted with the troublous times which preceded the battle of Actium, U. C. 723. B. C. 31. and followed the breaking out of the Jewish war, U. C. 819. A. D. 66. As a proof of the tranquillity prevailing in the Roman empire, at the birth of Christ, we may cite the ancient tradition that the nativity coincided with a year in which the temple of Janus was shut: and though there may be good ground to question the truth of this particular coincidence, (see my Diss. vol. i. Diss. xii. 444, 445. and Supplem. Diss. 409.) yet there is none, to impeach in the slightest degree the truth of the general fact—that the nativity happened at a moment of profound public peace and tranquillity.

With respect to the tranquillity of Judæa in particular, for the same period of time, the reader will find some remarks on that subject in my supplementary Dissertations, page 393. In the interregnum between the death of Herod, U. C. 751. B. C. 3. and the confirmation of Archelaus in the throne by Augustus, the same year, (Diss. vol. i. Diss. iv. App. i. and iii. and Supplem. Diss. ii. and iii. and p. 369—380.) there was much

Among the events of the fourth class, the first place, as we have observed, upon the authority of

confusion and turbulence in various parts of the country, it is true; which, however, speedily disappeared, and was followed by a time of settled peace and good order again, upon the return of Archelaus, to take possession of his dominions. After this, the insurrection of Judas of Galilee, U. C. 760. A. D. 7. in the same year with the deprivation and banishment of Archelaus, disturbed for a time the general quiet of the country; but it was quelled in less than the compass of a single summer, and order was restored as before. The only incident after this, connected with the general history of the times, by which the public tranquillity seems to have been affected, (at least for the period of the Gospel ministry,) appears to have been the matter of fact so casually alluded to, Luke xiii. 1. Harm. iv. 33: the connection of which with the sedition of Barabbas, not long before the last passover, I laboured to illustrate by probable arguments, *Dissertations*, vol. ii. *Diss.* xx. 553. sqq.

Josephus, indeed, gives us an account of a quarrel between Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, and Aretas king of Arabia Petraea, the first cause of which is to be traced to events which happened probably before U. C. 780. A. D. 27. the first year of our Saviour's ministry, but which did not proceed to open hostilities until near the end of the reign of Tiberius. The scene of these hostilities was, however, at a distance, on the eastern and southern borders of their respective dominions; nor did they proceed beyond one battle; in which Herod was defeated. After this, when Vitellius, the president of Syria, was marching by command of Tiberius, U. C. 790. A. D. 37. at the head of his troops, through Judæa, to punish Aretas for this breach of the public peace; his progress was stopped, and the commencement of hostilities prevented, by the news of the death of the emperor, which happened on March 16, and was heard in Jerusalem by the feast of Pentecost next ensuing, in that year: see my *Diss.* vol. i. vii. 289, 290. and *Diss.* viii. Appendix 304, &c. and *Supplem. Diss.* 387, 388.

The same tranquillity is a characteristic of the times in general, between the Ascension, A. D. 30, and the commencement of the Jewish war, A. D. 66: at least throughout the dominions of

St. Mark and St. Luke, is to be assigned to the fact of earthquakes ; not perhaps, from their superior

the Roman empire. Nor, indeed, had it been otherwise, could the propagation of the Christian religion, which began and was going on in all parts of that empire, for this interval, have been carried forward uninterruptedly. We read of an expedition of the emperor Caius into Germany, during this period ; of a disturbance in Mauritania ; and of an invasion of Britain in the reign of Claudius, and of hostilities subsequently carried on there, even in the reign of Nero ; but of nothing more important, or more capable of answering to the description of kingdom rising against kingdom—until the struggle began for the imperial purple, U. C. 821. A. D. 68.

Strictly speaking, the only two independent kingdoms, which at this period of the history of the world were capable of being stirred up against each other, and so embarking in hostilities answering to that description ; were those of the Cæsars and the Arsacidæ, the Roman empire and the Parthian, respectively, which divided the *οἰκουμένη* in some sense, between them. It cannot be shewn, however, that from the time of the unfortunate expedition of Crassus, U. C. 701. B. C. 53, or, at the latest, the expeditions of Antony, U. C. 718—U. C. 720. B. C. 36—34, until the reign of Trajan, there was any instance of a war, properly so called, between these two powerful empires, in which Rome was the aggressor, and the object of the contention was whether should subdue the other. It is very true, that in the interval from the Ascension to the commencement of the Jewish war, contemporary history records frequent instances of disputes between these rival powers, relating to the possession of Armenia, and which of the two should exercise the privilege of giving a king to that state, the territories of both lying contiguous to it ; the first instance of which disputes, for the interval in question, was that of which the reader will find an account in my Dissertations, vol. i. Diss. vii. 288, 289, in the reign of Tiberius, U. C. 787. and the last, that which ended in Tiridates' receiving in person, from Nero in person, at Rome, the investiture of the kingdom of Armenia, U. C. 819 : Diss. vol. ii. Diss. i. 97. Supplem. Diss. p. 465, 466.

To come, however, to the specification of such matters of

significancy, (for we have seen that all the signs of this class possess an equal degree of virtue in that

fact, as I apprehend to be more likely to have been contemplated by the prophecy, agreeably to the interpretation proposed in the text ; the fact of disputes or contests between the present representatives of the two ancient kingdoms of Judah and Israel respectively ; or between the Jews, and the modern representatives of any other of the kingdoms which had once been neighbours of their own, and while both were still in the possession of a common independence, had been distinguished by more or less of a constant spirit of hostility towards them ; such as Ammon or Moab, in ancient times :

Ant. Jud. xviii. ii. 2 : Josephus informs us, that U. C. 761 or 762. A. D. 8 or 9, under the administration of Coponius, the Samaritans, taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the custom, which at that time existed, of opening the doors of the temple at midnight ; got in unperceived, and scattered dead men's bones in the several porches. I mention this fact, to shew the disposition by which the Samaritans were at all times animated towards the Jews ; and how ready they would be to put any affront upon them, that was likely to wound their religious sensibilities most keenly.

Again, Ant. Jud. xx. i. 1 : U. C. 796 or 797. A. D. 43 or 44, in the first year of Cuspius Fadus, a dispute broke out between the Jews of Peræa, and the people of Philadelphia, (the ancient Rabbah, the capital of the children of Ammon,) *περὶ ἔρων κόμης μιᾶς λεγομένης* : which gave occasion to open hostilities on the part of the Jews. *Καὶ δὴ οἱ τῆς Περαιίας*, says Josephus, *χωρὶς γνώμης τῶν πρώτων παρ' αὐτοῖς ἀναλαβόντες τὰ ὄπλα, πολλοὺς τῶν Φιλαδελφηνῶν διαφθείρουσι.* This war was suppressed by the Roman procurator, who executed one of the ringleaders of the Jews, and banished the other two.

Again, Ant. Jud. xx. vi. 1, 2, 3. De Bell. ii. xii. 3—7 : U. C. 802. A. D. 49. when Cumanus was procurator of Judæa, about the time of the feast of tabernacles, the Samaritans attacked the Jews of Galilee, on their way up to the feast, at a village called Gimæa, or Geman. In revenge, the Jews of Galilee and Jerusalem in conjunction, carried fire and sword among the Samaritans. Thus was kingdom stirred up against kingdom, in the

respect,) but most probably from the priority of their occurrence^y. There can be no doubt, from the local peculiarities of Judæa, and the contiguous regions, that no prediction of the future was more likely to be fulfilled by the event, in the natural

literal sense of the terms, by a wanton act of aggression on the part of the Samaritans, to which they had no other provocation, but the old religious animosity between them and the Jews, and the hope of preventing the resort of the latter to keep their feasts at Jerusalem.

The disturbance thus excited, was with difficulty appeased by the interposition of Quadratus, governor of Syria, in person; and not without the punishment of many on both sides. Nor was tranquillity restored, before the passover of the ensuing year. The same quarrel with the Samaritans very nearly involved the Jews in an open rupture with the Roman government.

It happens that Tacitus in his *Annals*, xii. 54. has given an account of this dispute, as well as Josephus; for the reconciliation of whose respective statements with each other, I refer the reader to my *Diss. vol. ii. Diss. i. 11—17.* and *Supplem. Diss. 439.* The description of the former historian of the state of things, while it lasted, is even more express to the fact of its being tantamount to a war, than that of Josephus: *Atque interea Felix intempestivis remediis delicta accendebat, æmulo ad deterrima Ventidio Cumano, cui pars provinciæ habebatur: ita divisit, ut huic Galilæorum natio, Felici Samaritæ parerent, discordes olim et tum, contemptu regentium, minus coercitis odiis. igitur raptare inter se, immittere latronum globos, componere insidias, et aliquando præliis congregi, spoliaque et prædas ad Procuratores referre. hique primo lætari, mox gliscente perniciæ, cum arma militum interjecissent, cæsi milites. arsissetque bello provincia, ni Quadratus Syriæ Rector subvenisset.*

^y An additional reason for their being mentioned first, among the signs of the class in question collectively, may be the popular belief that earthquakes were the forerunners of pestilence. Thus, Seneca, *Nat. Quæst. vi. 27*: *Diximus solere post magnos terrarum motus pestilentiam fieri. nec id mirum; upon which he proceeds to assign the reasons of the fact.*

course of things, than the prediction of physical phenomena of this kind ; without calling into operation the agency of a special Providence, as specially concerned, under the circumstances of the case, in the verification of a prophecy, which was to answer a special purpose. We need not question, then, that this part of our Saviour's predictions did receive as literal a fulfilment, in the due course of things, as any of the rest ; yet it must be admitted that from the deficiency of our historical materials, we are not able to cite any recorded instance of earthquakes which actually came to pass in Judæa, before the necessary point of time to serve the purpose of a sign or presage of the approaching visitation of the Jews. Contemporary history makes mention of several before and after the time of the delivery of the prophecy, oftentimes very disastrous in their effects, so as truly to deserve the name of *great*, and oftentimes affecting the immediate neighbourhood of Judæa, if not Judæa itself ; and Josephus in particular describes a memorable instance of the same kind of natural phenomenon in the very vicinity of Jerusalem : but if the principles which we laid down to assist our judgment of the reference and application of the prediction in each of these instances, individually, were founded in truth ; the former must be excluded from the scope of the prophecy, as not happening in Judæa, the latter, as too late in the time of its occurrence to fulfil the common purpose of this class of events, as a sign ; though abundantly sufficient to attest the truth of the prophecy, by the correspondence of the matter of fact ^z.

^z The peculiarly ominous character supposed in the estimation of the nations of antiquity, to attach to the signs of the above

Of the next description of events, enumerated in this class, famines or dearths, the Acts of the Apo-

class, as well as to those of the sixth, which will require to be considered hereafter, may be illustrated by the following passages. Thus, Thucydides, of the phenomena which preceded or accompanied the Peloponnesian war ; i. 23: *τά τε πρότερον ἀκοῇ μὲν λεγόμενα, ἔργῳ δὲ σπανιώτερον βεβαιούμενα, οὐκ ἄριστα κατέστη, σεισμῶν τε περί, οἱ ἐπὶ πλείστον ἅμα μέρος γῆς καὶ ἰσχυρότατοι οἱ αὐτοὶ ἐπέσχον, ἡλίου τε ἐκλείψεις, αἱ πυκνότεραι παρὰ τὰ ἐκ τοῦ πρὶν χρόνου μνημονεύμενα ξυνέβησαν, ἀρχμοὶ τε ἔστι παρ' οἷς μεγάλοι, καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῶν καὶ λιμοὶ, καὶ ἡ οὐχ ἦκιστα βλάβασα, καὶ μέρος τι φθείρασα, ἡ λοιμωδῆς νόσος.* Also, Apollonius, *περὶ κατεψευσμένης ἱστορίας*, cap. 3: *κατὰ τόπους γινομένην, προλέγειν τὰ μέλλοντα ἀποβήσεσθαι, οἷον ὕμβρους μεγάλους καὶ ἀνομβρίας, ἔτι δὲ σεισμούς τε καὶ λοιμούς, καὶ παραπλησία.* Cap. 4: *προέλεγε δὲ καὶ οὗτος σεισμούς καὶ λοιμούς, καὶ τὰ παραπλησία, καὶ τὰ γιγνόμενα κατ' οὐρανόν.*

Among phenomena considered to possess a character of this description, earthquakes, from the rarity of their occurrence, perhaps, and from being so obviously out of the ordinary course of nature, and therefore bespeaking so plainly even to the eye of sense, the interposition of an extraordinary cause for their production, were generally considered as significant as any. On this account the Greeks looked upon the agitation of the island of Delos in particular, as one of the most ominous occurrences which could happen ; that island being currently reputed *ἀκίνητος* or immoveable. Confer Herod. vi. 98, and Thucyd. In like manner, Pliny observes of such earthquakes as Rome was known to have experienced, *Nunquam urbs Roma tremuit, ut non futuri eventus alicujus id prænuntium esset: H. N. ii. 86.*

The addition of the limitation, *κατὰ τόπους*, to the prediction of the fact of phenomena of this description, may make this class of events an exception to the general rule, for which we have contended with respect to the enumeration of future events in the other instances ; by implying that the earthquakes in question should not be confined to any one locality, like that of Judæa, but extend to various places, and consequently to other countries as well as Judæa. Or, if we still wish to restrict the prediction to such occurrences in Judæa, the silence of contemporary history with respect to its fulfilment in that locality,

stles supply an instance, in the fact of the famine which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar,

may perhaps be accounted for, by the consideration that such phenomena were to be partial, and visible only in places, however great or sensible within the particular sphere of their action. As such, they might escape the notice of the history of the times in general; which seldom perpetuates the memory of any thing among natural, any more than among civil events, that is not singular of its kind, and too conspicuous to escape observation.

The earthquake at the expiration of our Lord on the cross, Matt. xxvii. 51. and the earthquake at the resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 2. were both doubtless, preternatural events; and therefore so much the better calculated to shew the part which a special Providence, under peculiar circumstances, may be expected to take in the production of phenomena of this kind, designed to possess a peculiar, significant character. Among the visible symptoms of the presence of the Deity, on two memorable occasions recorded in the Old Testament, Exod. xix. 18. (Cf. Hebrews xii. 26.) and 1 Kings xix. 11. the quaking or trembling of the earth, in the vicinity was one. Cf. Judges v. 4: 1 Sam. xiv. 15: 2 Sam. xxii. 8: Psalm lxviii. 8; lxxvii. 18: Isaiah xxix. 6: Amos viii. 8; ix. 5. The earthquake at Philippi, Acts xvi. 26. when Paul and Silas were in prison there, is a proof of the same thing. Nor is any natural phenomenon more repeatedly specified in the book of Revelation, than this; either as itself among events yet to be literally fulfilled, or as a concomitant, in a significant sense, of others which are; see vi. 12. xi. 13. and xvi. 18. more particularly.

We read of an earthquake in Judæa, in the reign of Jero-boam king of Israel, and of Uzziah king of Judah, that is between B. C. 807. and B. C. 770. (Diss. vol. iii. App. iii. 231.) alluded to at Amos i. 1. as a very memorable event. The same earthquake is mentioned, Zech. xiv. 4. along with the prediction of a future event of the same kind, described as a great one; both which Josephus, Ant. Jud. ix. x. 4. thought to be the same thing, and coincident with the fact recorded historically, 2 Kings xv. 5. and 2 Chron. xxvi. 19, 20.

Strabo, i. cap. 3. p. 155. relates from Posidonius, whose age

alluded to chap. xi. 28. I had occasion to treat of this famine in my former work, and to illustrate its nature

was about B. C. 63, the fact of an earthquake in Phœnicia, which swallowed up a city situated above Sidon, and threw down two thirds of Sidon itself; besides spreading into Syria, and penetrating through the Cyclades, as far as Eubœa. Cf. Seneca, also, Nat. Quæst. vi. 24. Opera, v. 347. 5. Ibid. vi. 1. 307. 11, this writer observes of Tyre, Tyrus aliquando infamis ruinis fuit; which implies that it lay in a vicinity, peculiarly liable to earthquakes. Jerome, likewise, Operum iii. 117. *ad calc.* in Isaïæ xv. speaks of a great earthquake in Judæa, which happened when he was a boy; the sea every where overflowing the shore, and the walls of Ar or Moab (Areopolis) in particular, being thrown down: though, if this was the earthquake, which Ammianus Marcellinus shews to have happened, A. D. 365. coss. Valentiniano et Valente, its effects were not confined to Judæa. Josephus, however, attests the fact of an earthquake, in the seventh of the reign of Herod, U. C. 723. B. C. 31, which happened in the spring, when he was employed in the prosecution of hostilities against the Arabians—and was consequently confined to the borders of Judæa and Arabia; the effects of which were such that either 30,000 or 10,000 of the people perished from it, besides a vast number of cattle: Ant. Jud. xv. v. 2; B. Jud. i. xix. 3.

These instances sufficiently prove that Judæa and its immediate vicinity, were peculiarly liable to earthquakes, and that such natural phenomena might be no unusual occurrences there. To come, however, to the recorded instances of earthquakes, which may answer to the description of *κατὰ τόπους*, understood in a general sense, and not restricted to one locality more than another—for the interval between the delivery of the prophecy, and the time of the end.

The greatest earthquake in the memory of man, according to Pliny, H. N. ii. 86, was that which overwhelmed in one night, twelve of the principal cities of Asia. This happened in the reign of Tiberius, U. C. 770. A. D. 17: consequently too early for the present prophecy. Vide Tac. ii. 47: Dio, lvii. 17: Strabo, Libb. xii. xiii. *passim*: Seneca, Nat. Quæst. vi. 1. 11.

and extent from contemporary history ; the result of which was to shew that both in severity and duration,

It appears from Phlegon, *De Mirabilibus*, 13, 14, that the shock of this earthquake extended from Asia to Sicily.

It appears from Philostratus, 193. *B. Vita Apollonii*, iv. 11, that there was a great earthquake in Crete, at the time when the island rose up in the sea, between Crete and Thera ; that is, as we learn from Seneca and Dio Cassius, U. C. 799 or 800. A. D. 46 or 47.

Zonaras, xi. 10. 565. C. there was an earthquake at Rome, on the day when Nero assumed the *Toga Virilis* ; that is, U. C. 804. A. D. 51 : see Tac. *Ann.* xii. 41. There was another at Apamea, (as it is supposed, of Phrygia,) U. C. 806. A. D. 53 : Tac. *Ann.* xii. 58. There was another at Laodicea in Phrygia, U. C. 813. A. D. 60 : Tac. xiv. 27 : to which Eusebius, in *Chronico*, ad ann. 2079. adds, Hierapolis and Colossæ, both neighbouring cities. There was another in Campania, U. C. 815. A. D. 62. which threw down great part of Pompeii ; Tac. xv. 22. This earthquake is mentioned by Seneca, *Nat. Quæst.* vi. 1. *Operum* v. 301. and is there said to have happened, *Nonis Febru. Regulo et Virginio coss.* which answers to February 5, U. C. 816. A. D. 63. Its effects appear from this description of them to have been much more considerable, than the account of Tacitus would have implied ; affecting not only Pompeii, but Herculaneum, Nuceria, Neapolis, and all the surrounding country, more or less. We learn too, from the same authority, page 307. sect. 11 : that the year before, consequently U. C. 815. A. D. 62. there had been earthquakes in Achaia and Macedonia : *Anno priore Achaïam et Macedoniam quæcunque est ista vis mali, quæ incurrit, nunc Campaniam læsit.* Hence it is, that Epp. 91. (written on the occasion of the conflagration of Lugdunum, U. C. 811. A. D. 58.) sect. 9. *Operum* iii. 165. he expresses himself thus, and incidentally bears witness to the fact of earthquakes, among other calamities, as of very frequent occurrence in all parts, both then, and before that time : *In plenum cogitanda fortuna est : quoties Asia, quoties Achaïæ urbes, uno tremore ceciderunt ? quot oppida in Syria ? quot in Macedonia devorata sunt ? Cyprum quoties vastavit hæc elades ? quoties*

it would deserve to be considered the most remarkable example of the same kind of events, for the intermediate period between the Ascension, and the commencement of the Jewish war. And though this famine was general, and felt more or less over all the Roman empire at the time; yet there were special circumstances attending it, the effect of which would be to make it press more heavily upon the Jews in

in se Paphus corruit? frequenter nobis nuntiati sunt totarum urbium interitus, &c. Thus again, Nat. Quæst. vi. 26. 4. Operum v. 351. he observes, Adjice nunc, quod omnis ora maris obnoxia est motibus. sic Paphus non semel corruit: sic nobilis et huic jam familiaris malo Nicopolis. Cyprum ambit altum mare, et agitur. Tyrus et ipsa tam movetur, quam diluitur. To the liability of Nicopolis in particular to earthquakes, both at this time, and long after, we have an incidental allusion in Epictetus, apud Arrianum, ii. vi. 197: who, on the expulsion of the philosophers from Rome, by Domitian, retired thither, and writes thus of the place of his abode: *ἐγὼ δ' οὐ κινδυνεύω, ὡς οἰκῶ ἐν Νικοπόλει, ὅπου σεισμοὶ τοσοῦτοι;*

No fact, indeed, is better attested than the occurrence of very destructive earthquakes, at distinct intervals of time, for many years both before and after the Jewish war; by which various parts of the Roman empire suffered, but especially Asia Minor, Syria, and the islands of the Archipelago. On this subject I refer the reader to my former work, vol. ii. Diss. iii. 129, &c. and Supplem. Diss. 478. and Diss. xv. p. 230. sqq.

With respect to Judæa, in particular—as we before observed, the only instance recorded by Josephus, of an earthquake in that country, occurs B. Jud. iv. iv. 5. in the account of a terrible storm, which happened about November, U. C. 820. A. D. 67. on the night when the Idumæi, whom the party of the zealots had called in to their assistance, being excluded for a time by the people of the city and their leaders, were forced to lodge in the open air, under the walls of Jerusalem. Among other extraordinary characteristics of that storm, great rockings and rumblings of the earth are mentioned, which contributed not a little to heighten the fearfulness of its occurrence.

particular, than upon the inhabitants of other countries. Besides this famine too, there are evidences to be met with of others, from time to time, during the same interval; which may be presumed to have affected the Jews in common with the rest of their contemporaries, or to have been confined more especially to them.

The third particular of the events belonging to this class, *λοιμοὶ*, or pestilences, is so naturally the consequence of the former, that the fact of the one, under all circumstances, would be a voucher for the truth of the other. The sense of *λοιμὸς* does not require its meaning to be restricted to one pestilential disorder, like the plague, properly so called; but is equally applicable to any kind of sickness and mortality greater and more general than usual, which possesses a pestilential character, and in its destructiveness and the rapidity of its effects, resembles the ravages of the plague. Nor is there any instance, as profane history will shew, when a famine or dearth of food, a period of privation of the necessaries of life, has been known to precede—especially for any length of time, (the effect of which is invariably the most severely felt by the poorest, and consequently the most numerous class of society,) upon which, even after the proximate cause of its production has been removed, some epidemic sickness of this description may not be observed to have followed, and to have continued for some time longer^a.

^a The conjunction which is made in the prophecy of these two evils, *λοιμοὶ* and *λοιμοὶ*, is one which we invariably find to be made under like circumstances; as if the two visitations in question must necessarily go hand in hand. Thus, Hesiod,

The fifth class of signs was described under the name of *ταραχαί*, that is, troubles, disturbances, or

Τοῖσιν δ' οὐρανόθεν μέγ' ἐπήγαγε πῆμα Κρονίων,
 λιμὸν ὀμοῦ καὶ λοιμόν· ἀποφθινύθουσι δὲ λαοί.

Opera et Dies, 240.

and Phlegon, De Olympiis,

ὄρσε κακὸν λιμὸν παρὰ τοῖς, καὶ λοιμόν—

and Josephus reporting the last words of Niger of Peræa, whom the seditious or zealots put to death, U. C. 820. notwithstanding his gallantry in the common cause, against the Romans, says that in the act of perishing, he imprecated upon them, amongst other evils, *λιμὸν τε καὶ λοιμόν*: B. iv. vi. 1—both which, says he, God brought to pass, according to his curse; that is, as no doubt he means, in the course of the siege of Jerusalem, as it afterwards ensued; the two characteristic miseries of which, next to the slaughter from the weapons of the enemy, were famine, and the mortality so occasioned. Cf. the Oracula Sibyllina, *passim*. A judicial dearth is mentioned, Jeremiah xiv. 1—6.

Thucydides informs us of an old prophecy, which predicted the Peloponnesian war, and along with that, a *λιμὸς* or a *λοιμὸς*, men could not tell which; until the meaning of the oracle was cleared up by the event, and shewn to be the latter.

ἦξει Δωριακὸς πόλεμος, καὶ λοιμὸς ἅμ' αὐτῷ.

Thucyd. ii. 54.

With respect, however, to the specific particular of famines or *λιμοὶ*, for the interval between the Ascension and the Jewish war; of the famine, alluded to Acts xi. 28. the reader will find an account, in my Diss. vol. i. xiii. 565—570. Cf. Supplem. Diss. 429—431. It began in the third of Claudius, U. C. 796. A. D. 43. and lasted to his fifth or sixth; and was general over the empire. But its pressure was likely to be felt more severely in Judæa, than elsewhere; because it set in immediately after a sabbatic year, U. C. 794—795. *ab auctumno*. This famine is a case in point to illustrate the probable exemption of the believing Jews in particular, from the same evils, which for the period in question, fell to the lot of their unbelieving countrymen; at least such evils as were judicially to be inflicted on the latter, and as we find to be predicted in that capacity, on the present occasion. The prophecy of Agabus relating to this famine, which led to the

perplexities in general; denoting either the alarm and uneasiness, which the ominous appearances of

collection among the church of Antioch, to relieve the necessities of the church of Jerusalem during the approaching season of scarcity, was doubtless providentially designed to produce that effect for their benefit in particular, against the time of need.

Sabbatic years in Judæa, at this period of Jewish history, though observed with the utmost strictness, as much as when a special provision had been promised them, to guard against the danger of famine, by blessing the produce of the sixth year in a threefold proportion, so as to enable it to supply the means of subsistence until the harvest of the first year came in; were commonly succeeded by a time of scarcity. Such years were U. C. 795: U. C. 802: U. C. 809: U. C. 816: *excuentes* respectively. See my Diss. vol. ii. Diss. vii. Appendix. There is actual proof that some of these were succeeded by famines, not only as we have seen, the first, or that of U. C. 795, but in all probability, the rest likewise.

Thus Eusebius Chronicon Armeno-Lat.: Pars ii. 271. ad Ann. Abrahami 2065, specifies a famine in Greece and at Rome in the ninth of Claudius, U. C. 802. A. D. 49, when the modius of bread-corn rose to more than eleven times its usual price; see my Diss. vol. i. Diss. i. 19, where this occurrence is considered. If this famine was *great* at Rome, we may infer that Egypt and Africa, from which Rome was supplied with corn, had previously suffered from dearth; and if Egypt and Africa, we may presume Judæa also. In fact, Suetonius, Claud. 18, speaks of *assiduæ sterilitates*, and Tacitus, Ann. xii. 43, of *frugum egestas, et orta ex eo fames*, in reference to an incident in the reign of Claudius, which appears from the latter testimony to have been U. C. 804. A. D. 51. Suetonius' *assiduæ sterilitates* must imply that there had been a succession of years of dearth over the empire, for some time before that event, that is, before U. C. 804.

Again, a famine in Judæa is mentioned by the way, Joseph. Ant. iii. xv. 3, when Ishmael was high-priest; the true time of which I shewed in my former work to be the third of Nero, U. C. 810; A. D. 57: Diss. vol. ii. Diss. i. 5. sqq. The assaron or gomor of barley rose upon that occasion to four draclmæ,

the times would naturally create in all reflecting minds ; or popular commotions, riot, and confusion,

eleven or twelve times its usual price. I contended too, that the existence of a period of dearth, (probably on the same occasion,) was implied, Ant. xx. viii. 8, in the account there given of the treatment of the inferior orders of priests by the superior ; insomuch that from the difficulty of procuring subsistence, many of the poorer among the former, died of want. It was observable also that the contributions of the churches of Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia, for the relief of the church of Jerusalem, (the only instance of the kind, besides the other mentioned not long since, which the history in the Acts supplies,) were brought up by St. Paul to Jerusalem, at midsummer, in the year before this, U. C. 809. A. D. 56, very probably against a time of dearth, and certainly in a sabbatic year, then current.

The analogy of the case just cited, warrants the same inference from another instance of the same kind of treatment of one order of the priesthood by another, attended with similar consequences, Ant. Jud. xx. ix. 2. The time of this incident is proved by the context to have been corn-harvest, subsequent to the arrival of Albinus, the procurator of Judæa, in the province. Now Albinus, as I shewed, Diss. vol. ii. Diss. i. 82. sqq., did not arrive in his province until after corn-harvest, U. C. 815. The time of this incident, then, was at the earliest, corn-harvest, U. C. 816. A. D. 63, though Josephus, according to his usage, proceeds to mention something in the next section, which occurred at the feast of Tabernacles, U. C. 815.

With respect to *λοιμοί*, we may take it for granted, as we observed before, that every time of more than usual scarcity would be followed by more than usual mortality.

Suetonius, Neron. 39, and Tac. Ann. xvi. 13, record the fact of a pestilence, U. C. 818. A. D. 65, which in the course of a single autumn carried off 30,000 persons at Rome. This mortality becomes vastly greater, if we adopt the conjectural emendation of the numbers in Suetonius, proposed by Lipsius, who would read 300,000. But Orosius has the same reading of 30,000 ; and Orosius probably took his statement from Suetonius or Tacitus.

the customary effects of long-continued want and privation, or of any such evil the nature of which is to press most heavily on the lower orders of the community; or, more correctly, and more in unison with the known experience of the event, the combined effect of every antecedent species of sign besides—the increasing troublousness, restlessness, and agitation of the times, as the period of the end drew nigh—resembling that disturbance and commotion of the waters of the ocean which oftentimes precede a storm, and invariably continue for some time after one: a characteristic of the intervening period between the Ascension, and the destruction of Jerusalem, after a certain point, as well authenticated and as remarkable as any; especially towards its close: as the proofs collected under the first description of signs, are sufficient to shew.

Upon the signs of the sixth class, described as consisting of what was rendered fearful sights, and signs from heaven, we may remark, first, that they require to be distinguished asunder, as a genus from one of its species; every sign from heaven being necessarily a fearful sight, though not every fearful sight neces-

It would not be proper to cite the famine, and the mortality consequent upon it, during the siege of Jerusalem, as an instance of the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy; for that makes a part of the *θλίψις, ἀνάγκη, and ὄργη*, spoken of hereafter. Yet that mortality was such that, as Josephus tells us, B. v. xiii. 7. from the fourteenth of Xanthicus to the first of Panemus, 115,380 dead bodies were carried out of one gate of the city, and 600,000 more out of the other gates; all the bodies of poor men, who had died of the famine, and were buried at the public expense. For the description of this famine, see Josephus, B. v. x. 2, 3; xii. 3, 4; xiii. 7: vi. iii. 3, 4, 5; vii. 2.

sarily a sign from heaven: secondly, that what is rendered by a *fearful sight*, is not of necessity to be so understood; but would apply with equal propriety to any thing qualified to alarm or terrify an observer, from the properties of its own nature, whether as addressed to the eye, or to the ear, or to any of the senses besides: thirdly, that this distinction is not trifling, nor unimportant; for when we come to inquire into the historical fulfilment of the prediction, by events of either of these descriptions, we find it critically in accordance with the matter of fact—the two most remarkable events which attest this fulfilment, being one of them a phenomenon which appeared in the air, and therefore might strictly be called a sign *from heaven*, the other, a truly alarming and portentous occurrence, and therefore strictly entitled to the name of a *fearful thing* in general, yet not confined to the sense of sight, nor therefore a *fearful sight* in particular^b.

^b Among the *σημεῖα ἀπὸ οὐρανοῦ*, which are one of the particulars of this class of signs, the most ominous in their character, according to the prevailing opinion of the times, would be eclipses, or the appearance of comets. The fact of several instances of each of these phenomena is upon record, between the time of the Ascension, and the commencement of the Jewish war.

Thus with respect to eclipses; there was an eclipse of the sun, August 1, U. C. 798. A. D. 45: Dio, (apud Xiph.) lx. 26. There was another, U. C. 812. A. D. 59. on April 30, visible both in Armenia and Italy: Plin. H. N. ii. 72: Tacit. xiv. 12: Dio, lxi. 16. There was another, U. C. 813. A. D. 60. if Philostratus is to be believed; 203. B. C. Vita Apollon. iv. 14. Cf. Tacit. xiv. 22: Euseb. Chron. Arm. Lat. ad annum 2079.

And with respect to comets; one appeared, U. C. 807. A. D. 54. and was visible a long time: Seneca, Nat. Quæst. vii. 17, 2: 21, 2: 29, 3: Plin. H. N. ii. 23: Suet. Claud. 46: Dio, lx.

The prosecution of our plan would require us to proceed to the consideration of the signs of the first

35: Zonar. xi. 11. 567. B. Another appeared, U. C. 813. A. D. 60. and was visible for six months: Seneca, Nat. Quæst. vii. 17, 2: 21, 2: 29, 2: Plin. H. N. ii. 23: Tac. Ann. xiv. 21: Suet. Neron. 36. Of this comet, Tacitus observes, Inter quæ et sidus cometes effulsit: de quo vulgi opinio est, tamquam mutationem regni portendat: Suetonius, Stella crinita, quæ summis potestatibus exitium portendere vulgo putatur, per continuas noctes oriri cæperat. Pliny, *loc. cit.*, observes on the appearance of comets generally, Terrificum magna ex parte sidus, ac non leviter piatum. Besides this comet, there was another, as it seems from Tacitus, xv. 47. U. C. 817. A. D. 64. *excunte*: and another, as we may collect from Xiphilius or Dio, lxxv. 8. U. C. 822. A. D. 69.

As another sign from heaven, Pliny mentions, H. N. ii. 31. that U. C. 804. A. D. 51. three suns were seen at once. As a *φόβητρον*, or terrific occurrence, may be mentioned the island which suddenly rose up in the sea, near Thera, U. C. 799. or 800. A. D. 46 or 47: Seneca, Nat. Quæst. ii. 26, 4: Dio, lx. 29: Philostrat. 193. C. Vita Apollon. iv. 11: Euseb. Chron. Arm. Lat. Pars. II^a. 271. ad ann. 2061. For other portenta, in the reign of Nero, I refer the reader to Pliny, H. N. ii. 85. (Cf. xvii. 38.) ii. 106: and to the historians of that period, Suetonius, Tacitus, Dio, Zonaras, *passim*.

With respect to the signs of either description, belonging to this class, which more immediately concerned the Jews, Josephus enumerates them, B. Jud. vi. v. 3. in the following order; with whose account we may compare also Tacitus, Histor. v. 13.

I. The appearance of a star, in the shape of a sword, and stationary over the city. II. A comet, visible for a year. Both these would be signs from heaven. Whether they appeared before U. C. 819. A. D. 66, or after it, is not distinctly stated, though the comet in particular may well be supposed one of those, which we have seen to have been visible at Rome, U. C. 807. U. C. 813. U. C. 817—more especially that which is reported to have been visible, six months and upwards; consequently

and second classes, in order to the completion of this part of the subject ; but we shall find it advisable

that of U. C. 813. or of U. C. 817. It confirms the presumption of the appearance of these two phenomena before U. C. 819. that Josephus evidently enumerates all these signs, but the last, in the order of time ; and as those which he begins to mention next after these two, bear date from the first Jewish month, in this very year, and later, these which he had mentioned previously, must have happened before it.

III. On the eighth of Xanthicus, or Nisan, March 23. U. C. 819. A. D. 66. at three in the morning, so bright a light suddenly shone round about the altar of burnt offering, and the *ναὸς* or sanctuary, as to cause the appearance of noonday in the temple ; a phenomenon, which lasted half an hour. This also may be considered a sign from heaven.

IV. During the feast of the passover, next ensuing, from March 29 to April 5, a cow, in the act of being sacrificed, is said to have brought forth a lamb, in the midst of the temple ; an event, which if true, might well pass for a *φόβητρον*, or fearful thing.

V. During the same festival, the eastern or brasen gate of the inner temple, which was wont to be made fast to the ground every evening with strong bolts and bars, and required the united strength of twenty men to open or to shut it, was found standing wide open at midnight : another *φόβητρον*, or alarming occurrence : Cf. Tac. II. v. 13.

VI. On the 21st of Artemisius or Jar, that is, May 4, the same year, at sunset, the air was seen to be full of chariots, and armed battalions, darting from the clouds, and compassing or encircling the cities, like besieging armies, throughout the country. The war with Rome, it should be observed, had broken out in this month, not later than the sixteenth preceding. See my Diss. vol. i. Diss. xiii. p. 579, sqq. This would be a sign from heaven, of a truly portentous description to the Jews ; coinciding as it did with the first commencement of the contest on which they had embarked, the effects of which were destined to realize every thing in the end, thus pictured in the air to their view beforehand. Tacitus, H. v. 13. asserts the fact of this phenomenon, as well as Josephus. The second of Maccabees,

to postpone their consideration till some time longer; and to proceed to the examination of the

v. 2, 3. describes a similar appearance in the air, over Jerusalem, at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes' expedition into Egypt, which was followed by his invasion and occupation of Judæa. But *that* phenomenon is said to have lasted forty days; this, as it would seem, not more than a single evening.

VII. At the feast of Pentecost, next ensuing, which would fall out that year, on May 19, the priests whose duty it was to visit the inner temple in the night time, heard first, a noise and a motion of some kind, then on a sudden, the words, Let us depart hence; (*μεταβαίνωμεν ἐντεῦθεν.*) This also is mentioned by Tacitus, *loc. cit.*; and might be construed at the time to intimate the departing of the guardian angels, which so long as the temple continued to be the habitation of the Deity, to whom it was dedicated, not nominally only but really, may well be supposed to have resided there also, whether visible to the eye of sense or not; since, where the God of heaven is, there the host of heaven, his train and attendants, must be likewise. With this period, then, we might date the fulfilment of our Saviour's prediction, in the last words which he had addressed to the unbelieving Jews, before he made an end of his ministry: *ἰδοὺ, ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ἔρημος*: Matt. xxiii. 38: Harm. iv. 77. And it is truly remarkable, that this leaving of the temple destitute of its inhabitant unto them, should have coincided with the last of the legal solemnities, which the believing Jews might have celebrated in common with the unbelieving—before the march of Cestius Gallus on Jerusalem; the time of which, as we shall see hereafter, was synchronous with the feast of Tabernacles, next ensuing, and the fact of which we shall also see, was the signal for their flight.

VIII. At a time, which I shewed in my former work, vol. ii. Diss. i. p. 82 sqq. to coincide with the feast of Tabernacles, U. C. 815. A. D. 62, four years before the war, Jesus, or Joshua, the son of Ananus, a common Jew from the country, who had come up to attend the feast, suddenly began to cry, in the vicinity of the temple, *φωνὴ ἀπ' ἀνατολῆς, φωνὴ ἀπὸ δύσεως, φωνὴ ἀπὸ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων, φωνὴ ἐπὶ Ἱεροσόλυμα, καὶ τὸν ναὸν, φωνὴ ἐπὶ νυμφίους, καὶ νύμφας, φωνὴ ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν πάντα*—that is, “a voice from

collateral member of the first division of the prophecy, from verse 9—14, in St. Matthew's account.

“ the east ; a voice from the west ; a voice from the four winds, “ a voice unto Jerusalem, and the sanctuary ; a voice unto “ bridegrooms, and brides ; a voice unto all the people.” Though he was immediately brought before the Roman governor, Albinus, by the Jewish authorities, who were offended at this strange and portentous exclamation, and scourged there until the flesh was torn from his bones, he appeared insensible to the pain of his treatment ; and was so far from being compelled to desist by it, that he continued to cry out as before, all the time he was scourging. At length he was dismissed, as one possessed of an unaccountable madness ; and no further molested by either the Roman governor, or the Jewish sanhedrim : after which Josephus tells us, that for seven years and five months, that is, from the autumn of U. C. 815. A. D. 62, to midsummer U. C. 823. A. D. 70, night and day he continued to go about all the streets of Jerusalem, especially during the feasts, uttering the same cry, with no variation, except that occasionally he interwove it with, αἶ, αἶ ἱεροσολύμοις, “ alas, alas, for Jerusalem”—never once becoming weary, never getting hoarse with incessant crying aloud, taking no notice of any thing, neither shewing symptoms of gratitude towards those who gave him meat, or used him kindly, nor symptoms of resentment against those who gave him blows, or used him ill : until at last, as he was making the circuit of the walls during the siege, after repeating with a loud voice, woe to the city, and to the people, and to the temple, he added, αἶ, αἶ δὲ κάμοι : at which moment he perished by a blow from one of the Roman engines. On every account, the appearance and deportment of this man might well be considered a “ fearful occurrence,” of the most ominous description ; and if we may believe Josephus, it excited more alarm than all the signs and prodigies besides, which occurred, for the same period, either in the heavens or in any other quarter.

To the list of extraordinary phenomena, which preceded or accompanied the war, we may add the following, of which Josephus reminds the Jews of Jerusalem, in his speech to them, B. Jud. v. ix. 4. 900, early in the course of the siege: Τίτφ μὲν

It has been already observed, that two series of historical events are combined in this division, so far as it is prophetic of the future in general; which must consequently be supposed to begin together, and to run parallel to each other during the same interval, up to the same period; but the subjects of which, no more than the events themselves, are not the same. That the persons who begin to be addressed in this member of the division, as properly concerned in the matters of fact predicted by it, must be supposed to be Christians in general, is self-evi-

γάρ, says he, καὶ πηγαὶ πλουσιώτεραι ρέουσιν, αἱ ξηρανθεῖσαι πρότερον ὑμῖν. πρὸ γοῦν τῆς αὐτοῦ παρουσίας, τὴν τε Σιλωὰμ ἐπιλιποῦσαν ἴστε, καὶ τὰς ἔξω τοῦ ἄστεος ἀπάσας, ὥστε πρὸς ἀμφορείς ὠνεῖσθαι τὸ ὕδωρ· τὸ δὲ νῦν οὕτω πληθύνουσι τοῖς πολεμίοις ὑμῶν, ὥστε μὴ μόνον αὐτοῖς καὶ κτήνεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ κήποις διαρκεῖν. We learn indeed, from Jerome, iii. 77. *ad med.*: that Siloam was an ebbing and a flowing spring: Siloe autem fontem esse ad radices montis Sion, qui non jugibus aquis, sed in certis horis diebusque ebulliat: et per terrarum concava et antra saxi durissimi cum magno sonitu veniat, dubitare non possumus: nos præsertim qui in hac habitamus provincia. But this does not detract from the extraordinary character of the occurrence, if the matter of fact was as Josephus asserted; especially, as he reminds the people that they knew the same thing to have happened at the siege in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

Perhaps too, we may instance under the same head, the storm before referred to, U. C. 320, about November, on the night when the Idumæi were lodging under the walls of Jerusalem, as a *φάβητρον*, strictly so called. The time of the year when this happened, was certainly that which is known by the name of *Πλειάδων δύσις*—when terrible storms might be no unusual occurrence; see my *Supplem. Diss.* 448—450. But this exceeded in violence any thing of the kind before known; wind, thunder, lightnings, rain, and earthquakes, being mingled in horrible confusion: so that Josephus concludes his account of it, by observing, *πρόδηλον δ' ἦν, ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων ὀλίθρῳ τὸ κατὰσθημα τῶν ὄλων συγκεχυμένον· καὶ οὐχὶ μικροῦ τις ἂν εἰκάσαι συμπτώματος τὰ τέρατα.*

dent ; that they must be supposed to be Hebrew Christians in particular, is equally certain from the necessity of the case, and very important to the understanding and interpretation of the predictions themselves. The four apostles, to whom the whole of the discourse was addressed, cannot be considered as addressed in any part of it, in the capacity of simple individuals ; but as the representatives of a class, that of their fellow-disciples, and the future members of the future Hebrew church ; in which case, it was naturally to be expected, that along with the general view of the history of the times, for the period embraced by the prophecy, as affecting the rest of their countrymen, should be found combined a particular view of the same history, as affecting the Christian church among them ; in which disclosures of the future, the hearers themselves were personally so much more concerned, than in the others.

As indeed with respect to the proper subjects of any of the special dispensations of Providence, yet to come, which might become the matter of an express revelation beforehand, there was no division to be made of the Hebrew community in the complex, except into that part who received, and that part who rejected, the faith of Jesus Christ ; so in the character of these dispensations themselves, and in the final end proposed by making either of them known beforehand, we might expect a corresponding difference to be made, analogous to the distinction in the moral estimation and personal deserts of the subjects respectively affected by them. If both members of the same community should be represented alike as suffering under the providence of God, through the same period of time, and so far as placed in circum-

stances apparently the same ; yet the unbelieving part must be represented as suffering from its penal, the believing from its probationary, dispensations ; the former for their continued impenitence and infidelity, the latter for their faith and righteousness' sake ; the former under evils which might not only be severely felt, as judgments, at the time, but properly deemed significant, as ominous of worse to come ; the latter under evils which good men and faithful believers, cannot but know and trust to be temporary, and from which they may justly pray, and reasonably expect to be sooner or later delivered. From dangers or calamities of the former description it might be not obscurely intimated that the Hebrew Christians should be authorized to look for protection and immunity ; and yet before a certain time at least, they might not be promised exemption, or safety, from sufferings and trials of the latter.

That this member of the first division, as well as the former, consists of preceptive, combined with historical matter, has been already observed ; that the business of the historical portion of it is to acquaint the disciples with the course and circumstances of futurity, affecting themselves as members of the Christian community among the Jews, through the same period for which the order and kind of facts previously recited, were destined to affect the rest of their countrymen, may be taken for granted ^c. Combining as before the several accounts

^c The particle *τότε*, which ushers in this division of the subject in St. Matthew, is not to be referred to the point of time, indicated by the fulfilment of the last of the classes of signs just enumerated ; but to the point of time, indicated by the commencement

into one, we obtain the following enumeration of the particulars of the course and the circumstances in question: first, the beginning, continuance, and increase of persecution; secondly, the taking of offence by many; thirdly, the rise and agency of false prophets or teachers; fourthly, the growing lukewarmness, or coldness of the love of believers in general; and fifthly, the odium of the Christian name universally among the Gentiles.

Upon these particulars, we may observe, that those which are strictly distinct, and could not have arisen from each other, are the first and the last; which is probably the reason why St. Matthew subjoins the mention of the fifth to the first, while the other two Evangelists specify it at the end of all. The opprobrium attaching to Christianity, more especially among the Gentiles, however general or notorious the fact of such opprobrium might be, could not be said to have been a direct effect of the violence of persecution, even on the part of the first

of the enumeration of these signs in general: that is, it must be referred to the general question, *πότε ἔσται ταῦτα*, not to what immediately precedes in the order of the narrative.

St. Luke's *πρὸ δὲ τούτων ἀπάντων* in the parallel place, clearly affirms that the first overt act of persecution, as such, should precede in point of time the first overt instance of the fulfilment of the signs in question, even the earliest of the number: which was, indeed, the case. The class of signs which took the lead in point of priority, we saw was that of the stirring up of nation against nation, explained and illustrated as above. The first instance of contests between Jews and Gentiles, answering to this description, of which we have any account in history, was not earlier than U. C. 791. A. D. 38. *medio*; but the first persecution of the Hebrew church, properly so called, began about the same time the year before, U. C. 790. A. D. 37. *medio*.

and most determined adversaries of the Gospel, the Jews; though it was unquestionably abetted and promoted by their malice, and by the calumnies which they industriously propagated against the Christian religion. But each of the intermediate particulars between these two, might be a direct consequence of the first fact of all, the rise and continuance of persecution; and indeed they are represented to be so; for the particle of time, Matt. xxiv. 10, which introduces the second of the number, connecting it as a consequence with the first, extends to the third and fourth, in the eleventh and twelfth verses, and shews them to be consequences of it also.

Now to consider each of these particulars in its order: it is evident of the first, the beginning, continuance, and gradually increasing violence of persecution in general—that the particular persecutions intended are those which should be begun and carried on by the Jews; the subjects of which, consequently, should first and properly be their Christian countrymen. The terms of the prediction would imply this fact, if there were nothing else to prove it. The first instance of a persecution, therefore, which answers to the description in the prophecy, is that which was begun seven years after the Ascension; and was rendered memorable by the death of the protomartyr Stephen, and the active part taken in it by Saul of Tarsus^d. Nor is simply the fact that open and systematic opposition to the profession or to the propagation of the Christian religion, was to commence with the Jews, all that the prediction

^d Vide my Diss. vol. i. Diss. xiii. page 541. et seqq. Also Supplem. Diss. page 426. sqq.

specifies ; but the order in which they should begin, and afterwards go forward in the progress of their hostilities against it, is pointed out with an accuracy and precision, which the Acts of the Apostles alone prove to have been exactly in conformity to the event. The professors of Christianity were first to be brought and set before sanhedrim, and scourged in synagogues, and cast into prison ^e ; which it is evident they could not be except from the power and through the agency of the Jews themselves, whose courts of justice, and whose modes of treating criminals, real or reputed, these words describe ; and last of all, to be set before governors and kings : still through the instrumentality, and in consequence of the accusations of the same implacable and pertinacious enemies ^f. Even that circumstance of the prediction, “ And they will kill you,” Matthew xxiv. 9. or, “ And *some* of you will they cause to be put to death,” Luke xxi. 16, was literally fulfilled in the case of the hearers of the prophecy itself ; one of whom, James, the brother of John, was actually put to death by Herod Agrippa, to gain favour with his subjects ; and another, Peter, was saved from the same treatment on his part, with a view to please the same persons, only by being miraculously delivered from prison ^g : while, if we consider these four as representing the body of the apostles, the prediction in question was fulfilled in reference to that body, not only by the death of James, the son of Zebedee, but also by that of James, the son of Alpheus, sur-

^e Cf. Acts iii. 1, 2. 5—21 ; v. 17—40 ; vi. 8—vii. 60 ; viii. 1—ix. 31. (Cf. xxii. 19, 20.) xxii. 30. Also Matt. x. 17, 18 : Luke xii. 11.

^f Cf. Acts xxii. 27—xxviii. 19.

^g Acts xii. 1—19.

named the Less, the brother or cousin of our Lord, and the first bishop of Jerusalem ; whom the younger Ananus the high priest of the Jews put to death in the eighth of Nero ^h, U. C. 815. A. D. 62.

Again, the taking of offence spoken of in the next instance, is doubtless to be understood as a preliminary step to the falling away of some among the Christian community themselves ; a falling away which in the instance of those so offended, would be complete—amounting to absolute apostasy, or the renunciation of their previous profession—though the faith and constancy of the major part, (τῶν πολλῶν,) notwithstanding the defection of some of their members, might continue comparatively firm and unimpaired. The parable of the sower prepared us beforehand to expect instances of this apostasy everywhere, as one of the first and most natural effects of the subjection of the strength of Christian principle, and the fervour of Christian love, to so severe a trial as persecution ; a consequence, therefore, under such circumstances, first to be exemplified in that Christian community which should first be subjected to this trial ; the Christian community among the Jews. The fact of the previous defection, seems to be first mentioned in the present instance, for the sake of the extraordinary effect which is immediately after predicted to follow upon it ; a consequence, which would otherwise be unaccountable—the betraying, denouncing, delivering up of their former fellow-Christians by these apostates from their own

^h Vide my Dissertations, vol. ii. Diss. i. 80—86. Supplem. Diss. 460.

community ; a change of disposition towards them, going to the length of converting previous love and attachment into hatred and abhorrence, breaking through all ties of natural or acquired endearment, and turning the hand of parents against the children, and of children against the parents ⁱ.

The particular next specified, the rise, and the part attributed to the agency of false prophets, or rather of false teachers, I apprehend must be referred to the same principle, and to the influence of the same causes. They were to spring up in the

ⁱ Cf. Matt. x. 34—39. Harm. iii. 26: Luke xii. 49—53. Harm. iv. 32: Luke xiv. 26. Harm. iv. 40.

This peculiar consequence of the taking offence and the falling away of some of the former professors of the Christian religion, however lamentable, or even horrible, to contemplate, is yet in course with the nature of things—supposing at least, the offence itself to originate in no venial infirmity, and to terminate in apostasy properly so called. It is found by experience that none are commonly more inveterate enemies of a religion, or of a party in the state, than those who having once belonged to it, have subsequently deserted it. It is thus only that we can account for the peculiarly malicious and rancorous spirit of hostility to the Christian religion, which appears to have actuated certain of its deistical, sceptical, and infidel opponents.

The predicted effect too is confirmed in some instances by the testimony of history ; and what happened in one of these cases, we may presume would happen under the same circumstances, in another. At the persecution of the Christians by Nero, U. C. 817. A. D. 64. upon the charge of having set fire to the city of Rome, Tacitus informs us that many were betrayed or pointed out by the informations of the rest: Ann. xv. 44: and Pliny, Epp. x. 97. implies the same thing at the time of his persecution of the Christians of Bithynia, U. C. 865. A. D. 112. (Vide my Supplem. Diss. p. 222, 223.)

bosom of the Christian community, and to be another of the effects of persecution, the next in order of time to the consequence last mentioned : in which case, the church in question being the Hebrew Christian church, and the persecution which was to produce this effect, being the trial of Christian faith and constancy to which these in particular were exposed—that is, at the hands of their unbelieving countrymen ; the description of false teachers, which the prophecy most probably had in view in this instance, I should apprehend to be the Judaizing teachers—the object of whose preaching, and the effect of whose doctrines, was to do away with the scandal of the cross, by inculcating upon converts to the Gospel, the necessity of the observance of the Law of Moses still—instead of an absolute and total reliance upon one sole and sufficient ground of trust, the merits of a crucified Saviour. The doctrines of Christianity, in the mouths of such teachers, were divested of every thing, so characteristic of them, in which consisted their offensiveness to the Jews ; and the propagation of the Gospel, through the instrumentality of apostles like these, was but another means for the multiplication of proselytes to Judaism. It is not too much to say, that the appearance of such teachers, and the first motive to their peculiar doctrine, was mainly the effect of persecution, and persecution from the unbelieving Jews ; since we find St. Paul too asserting of them, that it was out of no zeal for the Law in particular, or from any scrupulousness about its observance in their own persons—that they laboured to make converts to it among the professors of the Gospel also ;

but only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ^k.

^k Galat. vi. 12, 13. The proper sense of *ψευδοπροφήτης* is that of a false teacher, rather than of a false prophet. In this sense it is clearly used, Matt. vii. 15: and as we may presume also, 1 John iv. 1: and in this sense, it would be strictly applicable to any description of persons, who, whether they pretended to supernatural powers in other respects or not, were yet the authors and propagators of doctrines, which a genuine Christianity could not recognise as her own: doctrines strictly heretical, and contrary to the form of sound words. It is certain that the most numerous class of persons of this description, between the time of the delivery of the prophecy, and the commencement of the Jewish war, were the Judaizing teachers above referred to; though I would not be understood to say that, were there any others, for the same period of time, not strictly belonging to their school, yet heresiarchs as well as they, and propagators of false doctrine as well as they, our Saviour might not have them in his eye too, when he delivered this prediction of their future appearance; more especially, if they first appeared in the bosom of the Jewish church, and went forth thence into the rest of the Christian world. This would be true especially of Simon Magus, the founder of the Christian sect of the Gnostics, and of his followers; the nominal conversion of Simon to Christianity, and therefore in all probability, the date of his heresy, being to be placed U. C. 790. A. D. 37: vide my Diss. vol. i. Diss. xiii. 541. sqq. (Cf. Supplem. Diss. 426, 427.) also Diss. ii. 95. and Supplem. Diss. 348, 349.

That we are right, however, in understanding the prediction of an effect which was to be the consequence of persecution, more particularly; and of persecution beginning first with the Jews, and personally affecting first Jewish believers; and therefore of the rise and the doctrines of Judaizing teachers, may be inferred from the following passages of St. Paul's Epistles, besides that referred to above—whence it will appear that the object of these teachers and of their doctrines, in every shape, must have been mainly this: to do away with the scandal of the cross of Christ, as more offensive to the Jews in particular, than to any others to

Again, as another of the effects of persecution, but of persecution, long, violent, and aggravated of its kind, even the firmness of those, who had hitherto preserved their constancy unshaken, should begin to waver ; a description of consequences which points to a period late in the order of succession, and converging to the time of the end itself. “ Be-
 “ cause of the multiplying of iniquity,” that is, because the reign of lawlessness and terror was every day becoming more outrageous—because oppression was every day becoming more intolerable, “ the
 “ love,” by which is meant the religious attachment, the faith, the fervour, the devotion—“ of the many,
 “ should be chilled, and begin to grow cold ;” an effect, which might be preparatory to its becoming entirely frozen at last—that is, utterly extinct and dead within them, but is not as yet supposed to have arrived at that result—however nearly it may be approximating to it. This description of conse-

whom the same doctrine could be preached—the distinction in reference to this subject, between the Jew and the Gentile or Greek, being, that the preaching of Christ crucified was *μωρία*, or folly to the Greek, but *σκάνδαλον*, or a stumblingblock to the Jew. Vide 1 Cor. i. 23 : 2 Cor. xi. 13—15. (Cf. 4. 22.) : Gal. ii. 11—21 ; iv. 29 ; v. 11 ; vi. 12, 13. Cf. Philipp. iii. 3, 4. 18, 19 : 1 Tim. i. 7, 8 : Titus i. 10—16 ; iii. 9—11.

On the subject of *ψευδοπροφήται*, or false teachers generally, for the interval between the delivery of the prophecy, and the commencement of the Jewish war, I refer the reader to Acts xx. 30 : Gal. i. 7, 11 ; v. 1—4 : Rom. xvi. 17, 18 : Philipp. i. 15—18 ; iii. 2, 18, 19 : Coloss. ii. 8, 16, 17—23 : Hebrews xiii. 9 : 1 Tim. 3, 4, 6, 7, 19, 20 ; iv. 7 ; vi. 3—5, 20, 21 : 2 Tim. ii. 16, 18, 23, 25, 26 ; iii. 6—8. Cf. 2 Pet. ii. iii. 3 sqq. Jude 4. sqq. Also 1 John ii. 18, 19, 22, 23, 26 ; iv. 1, 3, 5 : 2 John 7, 10, 11.

quences then, agrees with the probable inference respecting the state of things in the Hebrew church, just before and at the time of the promised deliverance, called the coming of the Son of man—which we saw to be raised by that ominous doubt expressed in the question, on the former occasion, “ Nevertheless, when the Son of man is come, will he find THE FAITH in the land ^m ?”

Again, with respect to the fulfilment of such a prediction, as that of the odium under which the profession of Christianity and the name of Christian should come to labour among all nations ; it is one which from the necessity of the case could be ac-

^m Towards the close of the troublous period, between the delivery of the prophecy, and the time of the end, political circumstances conspired to allow the violence and hostility of the Jews against Christianity, free scope ; as the people became more refractory, and the Roman governors successively appointed over them, less able or less willing to preserve order, and to protect all descriptions of persons indifferently. On this principle we may account for the boldness and presumption of the younger Ananus, in putting James the bishop of Jerusalem to death, on his own authority ; notwithstanding that the province was at the time subject to the administration of Albinus. The wickedness of the generation contemporary with the end, is described by Josephus in various places, in truly horrible colours, though probably not exaggerated ; see B. iv. vi. 3 : v. i. 3 ; x. 5 ; xiii. 6, &c. It is in the nature of contests like that which the unbelieving Jews waged against the believing—to grow fiercer and hotter, the longer they continue. The Epistle to the Hebrews, written, as we saw, (*supra* vol. iv. 239.) for the express purpose of reviving the courage of the suffering Hebrew church, would alone be competent to prove that the trial to which they had previously been exposed, was then, or would soon be at its height, and their faith, unless timely rekindled and reanimated by fresh encouragements, would be in the most imminent danger of failing them.

completed only gradually. The Gospel must have been preached every where, if not established every where, before it could begin to be detested every where; nor could the religion have enemies where it had not also friends, nor persecutors where it had not professors. With reason then does this particular come the last in order; and the prediction of the universal disrepute of Christianity, precede immediately the prediction of its universal propagation; which was probably the ground on which St. Mark and St. Luke, in their statement of the order of these particulars, departed from the arrangement of St. Matthew, that so the connection of the event with the prophecy might be rendered the closer and more apparent. As to the matter of fact, involved in the prediction itself, nothing admits of a clearer confirmation; as the particulars subjoined in the note will shew^u.

^u The fulfilment of our Saviour's prediction, in the present instance, is singularly confirmed by the testimony of the Jews of Rome, in their declaration to St. Paul, Acts xxviii. 22: *περὶ μὲν γὰρ τῆς αἰρέσεως ταύτης γνωστόν ἐστὶν ἡμῖν ὅτι πανταχοῦ ἀντιλέγεται.* The time of St. Paul's arrival in Rome, on the occasion of his first visit, as I shewed in my former work, vol. ii. Diss. i. (Cf. Supplementary Diss. 433—467.) was U. C. 812. A. D. 59. the fifth of Nero. The increasing odium of Christianity, up to the same time, is strongly implied in incidental testimonies to that effect, which occur in the Epistles, written before that date; for instance, 1 Pet. ii. 12; iii. 16; iv. 14; iv. 16: the time of which was probably but little prior to the arrival of St. Paul at Rome, as I shewed in my former work, vol. i. Diss. ii. Cf. Supplem. Dissert. 342—363. Other testimonies to the same truth, occurring in various parts of the New Testament, before or after the same period, up to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, might be collected, and stated chronologically, if necessary. The specific effect in question, from the reception and profession of

Lastly, we may observe upon all the above particulars in common, that though they succeed each

Christianity, was to be expected in due time, from Matt. v. 11: Luke vi. 22: Matt. x. 22: John xvi. 2, &c. The name of Christian was first given to the professors of the religion, at Antioch, Acts xi. 26: (Cf. xxvi. 28: 1 Pet. iv. 16. when it was become their common name:) but whether as a term of reproach, or not, does not appear; though most probably not. (Cf. Mark ix. 41.) For proofs however of the existing and gradually increasing odium or infamy, attaching to the profession of Christianity, see Acts xiii. 6—8. 45; xvii. 6, 7; xviii. 6: xix. 9; xxii. 21. 28; xxiv. 5, 6. 9. 14. Cf. xxv. 7, 8: 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13: Rom. ii. 24: 1 Tim. iv. 10: James ii. 7: 1 Pet. ii. 12. 15; iii. 16: iv. 4. 14. 16.

Tacitus, when giving an account of the burning of Rome, U. C. 817. A. D. 64. a crime, as we know, purposely laid to the charge of the Christians, in order to divert the odium of the fact from its real author, the emperor Nero—Ann. xv. 44, though he bears witness to their innocence of this particular crime, yet speaks of them as “per flagitia invisos,” as “sontes et novissima exempla meritos;” and calls Christianity itself, “exitiabilis superstitio,” one of the “atrocia” and “pudenda,” which along with every thing else of the same kind, had made its way to the city, and obtained a reception there. No doubt it was the general infamy and discredit under which the professors of Christianity had by this time come to labour, that made Nero fix upon them as the likeliest persons on whom to transfer the stigma of his own atrocious act. The popular opinion of the capability of the Christians to commit any kind of crime, however enormous, would give a colour of probability beforehand to the accusation against them in this instance. Suetonius, also, in reference to their treatment either upon this occasion, or on some other in the reign of Nero, (Neron. 16, 3.) says of the Christians, “Afflicti supplicii Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novæ ac maleficæ:” and Pliny the Younger, in his letter to Trajan, lib. x. 97. written, as I endeavoured to shew in my Supplementary Dissertations, Diss. xii. (see pages 222, 223.) most probably U. C. 865. A. D. 112. upon occasion of the persecution which

other, as the classes of signs in the former instance were observed to do, in the order of time ; yet after

he was carrying on against the Christians of his province, Bithynia, still speaks of the “ flagitia cohærentia nomini (Christianorum”) as matter of course ; though he has nothing more specific to lay to their charge, than the fact of what appeared to him to be an unaccountable obstinacy, and a “ superstitio prava “ et immodica,” a perverse and excessive kind of superstition. We might illustrate if necessary the same repute from the allusions of writers contemporary, or nearly so ; Lucian, in his *Pseudomantis*, 24. 33. *Operum* ii. 232. 244, 245 : and Aristides, *Ora-tio* xlvi. *Operum* ii. 402. *ad calc.*

That the calumnies once current against Christianity, were of a very early origin, though they might not all come into vogue at once, appears from the remains of the oldest of the Christian apologists, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus ad Autolyicum, Tertullian, and others : each of whom speaks of these accusations, and of the prejudice against the religion thereby excited, as of long standing, and general reception. The charges in question, were they to be particularised, would appear incredible to an unlearned modern reader ; since there was nothing, the most calculated to excite horror and disgust, and to inflame the passions of a common humanity against the professors of such principles, or the perpetrators of such enormities, that was not currently imputed to the pure and holy religion of Jesus Christ, and thought to make a part of the practice of Christians. Atheism and profaneness—the utter contempt of every thing which the world deemed sacred—human sacrifices and banqueting upon human flesh—the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes—unnatural lusts, incest, and the like ; these are the heads of the charges in general, under which and the odium excited by which, the profession of Christianity once laboured. The refutation of such charges, however unnecessary it may seem to us at the present day, was, unhappily, only too incumbent on the champions of the Gospel in former times : to cite passages from whose works in reference to them would be an endless task, as they occur almost in every page. See Justin M. *Apolog.* i. p. 5. l. 12 ; 8. 16 ; 11. 1 ; 43. 17 ;

one and an earlier instance of their number had begun to take place, that also might continue in

45. 12; 47. 6: Apolog. ii. 127. 17—131. 5: Dialog. 155. 17: Tatian, Oratio ad Græcos, capp. 6. 42: Origen, contra Cels. vi. 27. 40: Operum i. 651, 652: Athenagoræ Legat. p. 5. l. 13. 6. 1; 9. 12; 14. 4; 17. 8; 145. 3; 157. 6: Theophilus ad Autolyicum, i. 2. p. 4; iii. 3. p. 278; 15. p. 322: Tertullian, v. Apologeticus 2. 4. 7. 8: Ad Nationes, i. 7: Minucius Felix, 10—13, &c.

We learn, indeed, from Origen, *loc. cit.* that long before his time, about A. D. 250, the falsehood of these accusations was known to the world at large, so that it was scarcely necessary any longer to refute them: but in the time of Celsus, an hundred years before, at least, they would be still fresh, and commonly believed. Not but that even to those who were not acquainted with the true character of genuine Christianity, and even at that time, they might and they did appear too horrible not to carry with them their own refutation, to whose soever charge they might be laid; as Trypho the Jew acknowledges, apud Justin. M. Dialog. 155. 27: *περὶ δὲ ὧν οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσιν, οὐ πιστεῦσαι ἄξιον, πόρρω γὰρ κεχώρηκε τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως.* The only answer which Blandina, or Biblias, two of the Martyrs of Vienne, A. D. 169 or 170, (Vide my Supplementary Diss. xv. p. 296 sqq.) returned to such accusations, in the midst of their tortures, was simply this, *Χριστιανὴ εἰμι· καί· παρ' ἡμῖν οὐδὲν φαῦλον γίνεται:* and *πῶς ἂν παιδία φάγοιεν οἱ τοιοῦτοι, οἷς μηδὲ ἀλόγων ζώων αἷμα φαγεῖν ἐξόν;* Euseb. E. H. v. i. 157. D. and 159. A: upon which we may observe by the way, that the Christians of this period considered the apostolic injunction to abstain from blood, Acts xv. 20. 29; xxi. 25, to possess the same obligation upon Gentile converts, still, as at first; in other words, to be of perpetual obligation: a conclusion which might be confirmed, if necessary, by the testimony of the oldest Christian writers, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, &c.

It would not be difficult to advance probable reasons to account for the origin of these charges against Christianity, at least in part; though perhaps no reasons which we can advance,

being, and produce its effect, contemporaneously with another, beginning after it.

on grounds of simple probability, will account for them entirely. The accusation of atheism might arise from the known fact that the Christians made no scruple of denying the divinity of those beings whom the Gentile world esteemed gods; and the Christian apologists admit that they were truly atheists in that sense, but not as denying the one true God and Creator of all things. It is a possible supposition too, that the charge brought against them of meeting in secret, to banquet on human flesh and blood, might be founded ultimately on the doctrine of the Christian eucharist, and the spiritual presence of Christ in that mystery; and be resolvable into a gross and perverted apprehension of a fact, about which, however reservedly communicated even to Christians themselves, the Gentiles, we may presume, must have heard somewhat—that the Christians met at stated times to feed upon the body and blood of Christ. The specific charge, coming under this general head, of sacrificing and devouring infants, might be due in like manner to a perversion of the doctrine of regeneration, or a gross and distorted account of the rites and ceremonies of Christian baptism, particularly as administered upon infants—their dedication to God, by that act, (which might be called a sacrifice,) their immersion in water, and the like. Promiscuous mixtures between the sexes under cover of darkness, might easily be laid to their charge, in consequence of the custom of both sexes meeting to celebrate their *ἀγάπαι*, or feasts of love, in conjunction, by night, so long as the interdicts against the open profession of Christianity rendered it unsafe to meet and celebrate either that office of their religion, or any other, in the day time: and as to the charge of incest, in particular, it might easily be founded on the peculiar doctrine of Christian Ethics, by which every member of the common family of faith is taught to regard every other, in his capacity of a fellow-believer, as a brother or a sister.

The resemblance, at first sight perceptible, between the more secret and mysterious observances of the Christian religion, especially that of the celebration of the eucharist, and even the feasts of charity, above alluded to—and the *τέλη*, *initia*, or mysteries of Gentilism—might be another cause to operate to the

The preceptive matter, combined with the prophetic in this instance, consists of two particulars,

prejudice of the Gospel. The world at large might be easily persuaded that what was solemnized with so much secrecy, and so carefully kept from the knowledge and observation of all but the Christians themselves, was something that would not bear to see the light; and perceiving the same apparent secrecy and reserve in this respect, in the celebration of the rites of Christianity, as in that of the Eleusinian, the Bacchanalian, the Samothracian, or any other of the mysteries, properly so called; they might be tempted to conclude, or might readily be induced to believe, that the same wickedness and abominations were practised in the one, under the veil of secrecy, which were currently thought to be practised in the other. Cf. Justin M. Apolog. i. 47. 6: ii. 128, 11.

Another motive to increase the odium against Christianity, was the fact that apostate Christians purposely spread such calumnies against the sect to which they had once belonged themselves, either to excuse their own secession from it, or from that natural disposition in the apostate to hate the religion which he has renounced, even with more of virulence and antipathy for having believed in it: and that Christians, not strictly speaking apostates, yet, under the extreme violence of torture, yielding to a weakness more worthy of pity than of reprobation, women or slaves, belonging to the Christian society, were sometimes compelled to confess to such things: see Justin M. Apolog. ii. 127. 19. The persecution of the churches of Vienna and Lugdunum, in the reign of M. Aurelius and L. Verus, is said to have been aggravated by the effect of confessions thus extorted; Euseb. E. H. v. 1. 156. D: Irenæus, *Fragm. Opera*, 469, line 7. This cause in particular would be of frequent operation in these early times. The first thing which the Gentile authorities might be expected to do, when commencing a persecution of the Christians, would be to lay hold on the slaves, or the weaker sex among their body, to extort confessions from them; which, however obtained, would be eagerly received, and acted upon as true, and as affecting the character of the whole society. The well-known letter of Pliny the younger furnishes a case in point to each of these suppositions. Many were brought before

referred to the principal event foretold by the other ; one of them a special precept, concerning some, the

him charged with being Christians, who, it appeared upon examination, had ceased to be so, from three to twenty years and more, before the time of this inquiry. We find him also subjecting to torture two of the *ancillæ* or *ministræ* (that is, the deaconesses) of the Christians, to ascertain from their confessions the real principles or practices of the society ; Quo magis necessarium credidi, ex duabus ancillis, quæ ministræ dicebantur, quid esset veri et per tormenta quærere. The same letter is eminently valuable, likewise, as shewing that even according to the information obtained from the apostate members of the society, no evil was reported of the Christians, and much good : Adfirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ, vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die (every Sunday, we may presume) ante lucem convenire : carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem : seque sacramento non in seculum aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abmuerent : quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coëundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium : quod ipsum facere desisse post edictum meum, quo secundum mandata tua hetærias esse vetueram. Nor, as he further tells us, did his examination of the two deaconesses by torture, elicit the discovery of any thing that could be considered a crime, or an actual offence against the laws : nothing worse than that *superstitio prava et immodica*, to which I referred not long since.

Another cause to produce or to increase the odium against the professors of a true and genuine Christianity, might be this ; that some of the different heretical sects, which appeared so early in the Christian history, either were actually guilty of the enormities which these calumnies imputed to the Christians generally, or are charged with being so ; Justin. M. Apolog. i. 43. 17 : Irenæus i. i. 12. p. 30. 15 : Euseb. E. H. iv. 7. 120. D : Epiphanius adv. Hær. Nicolaitæ, Gnostici, &c. Even these heretics would go by the name of Christians, and would avow themselves, by profession at least, to be Christians ; so that, with the world at large, their principles or their practices, if

other a general one, concerning all, under the circumstances of the case; yet neither of them so exclusively preceptive, but that a prophecy is implied in each, under the form of a promise suspended upon a condition—and consequently for the fulfilment of the promise, presupposing the observance of the condition.

The first of these instructions concerns the mode of conduct, proper to be observed by those, who

any thing was known about them, might easily pass current for the principles or practice of the Christians generally.

But to whatever cause we may trace the first origin of the calumnies spread against Christianity, from so early a date, there is no doubt that their effect was to make the name of Christian a proverb of reproach; and literally to fulfil the prediction that they should be hated of all men, for their denomination's sake, and that whosoever killed them, should think he was doing the cause of virtue, morality, and common humanity, an acceptable service. It is a wonderful thing, that the progress of the Gospel should have been able to make its way against such a prejudice as this; which in a moral point of view was not less powerful, or less likely to impede it, than the violence of actual persecution. With the common people, *οἱ ἄθεοι* was the familiar name of the Christians; and to the anger of their gods, because such an impious race was allowed even to exist, they attributed every misfortune, political or physical, every evil of a public or general nature, that happened to befall; droughts, rains, locusts, mildews, famines, earthquakes, wars, fires, or pestilences; so that, as Augustine observes, *De Civitate Dei*, lib. ii. 3: it was become a proverb, *Pluvia deficit: causa Christiani*. Vide Arnobius, Orosius, Augustin, *passim*. These calamities were unhappily only too frequent in the second and third centuries more particularly; and as often as they occurred, they served as a signal for the commencement of the persecution of the Christians, more or less generally, with the sanction of the constituted authorities, or of a clamour for it on the part of the vulgar, which, even when disposed to protect the Christians, the magistrates or governors were little able to resist.

should be placed in a situation, requiring them to answer publicly in behalf of their religion; and therefore, from the nature of the case, is to be restricted to the apologists or advocates of Christianity, the evangelists, the preachers or apostles of the Gospel, in particular; for which reason, perhaps, this part of the prophecy on the mount has been omitted by St. Matthew, because the same injunctions made part of the charge delivered to the apostles, and recorded in the tenth chapter of his Gospel.

The other practical admonition is of a nature, necessarily to concern the whole of the community of Hebrew Christians in the complex. It is first introduced by St. Mark, and in so significant a manner, as of itself to imply that it was intended with a special reference to the behaviour of professing Christians under persecution in general. "But look ye unto yourselves;" look betimes to your own faith and resolution—see that both are previously well settled for every thing which is about to betide you; hard and severe is the trial which they must shortly undergo. It is repeated by St. Matthew and St. Luke, under circumstances of still greater solemnity, when not merely the *fact*, but the long continuance of persecution, having been intimated; it was further implied that the love of the many, the patience and perseverance of the great body of the church, would be in the most imminent danger of succumbing under the pressure of external violence, and every encouragement would be necessary, to revive the hopes which had begun to droop, and to animate the courage which had begun to faint; "But he who hath endured to *the* end, the same shall be

“ saved,” and, “ In your endurance get ye your lives.” Such then was the promise, and such the condition annexed to it, in this instance; the promise of so complete a protection and security from all the evils coming on their unbelieving countrymen, that not an hair of their head should be lost in the end—but upon the condition of so unconquered a patience, and so unwearied a perseverance, in the profession of their faith, that no danger nor difficulty to the contrary, should have power to move or unsettle, much less to overcome them.

With respect to the first mentioned precept, the substance of the promise comprised in it, according to the two evangelists who record it, Mark xiii. 11, and Luke xxi. 14, 15, amounts to this; that as often as they should have occasion to defend themselves, or their religion, against the accusations of their adversaries, before judicial tribunals of any kind, before governors or before kings, they should find words and eloquence at will: a promise which, if we consider what these defenders or apologists of Christianity were to be—how unlearned and uneducated, how little versed in the arts of composition, and the practice of rhetoric—and what the cause which they should be called upon to defend, as well as the very probable frequency of such occurrences; it must be confessed, would be neither unnecessary in itself, nor unconsolatory to the hearers. But the promise is given on a condition of a truly observable kind; the condition of not premeditating themselves, of studying nothing for their defence beforehand, of trusting entirely to the inspiration of the moment. The final end, then, of such an assur-

ance could not be simply to relieve the apostles from the very natural anxiety which they might feel, under the prospect of such emergencies, combined with the consciousness of their existing disabilities to acquit themselves becomingly in situations of so difficult a kind; but much more to impress them strongly with the conviction beforehand, that the extraordinary assistances of the Spirit, which must compensate for those existing disabilities, to be relied upon at all, must be implicitly and totally relied upon; their own cooperation towards a common end must be simply that of instruments, given up and resigned to be actuated by another; the Holy Spirit would do all, as of himself, but nothing otherwise; to distrust his aid or agency, to regard it as only supplementary—to combine any thing with it of their own, as equally necessary to the effect—would be to dispense with it, to supersede it, to lead to its withdrawal entirely. The same principle of an implicit faith, that is, of a confident and unhesitating reliance on the cooperation of a power from on high, should be as necessary to the success of what the apostles should say, as to the performance of what they should do. Their ability must be supplied for the occasion: their eloquence must be in the strictest sense extemporaneous. The same Spirit which wrought by their hands, would speak by their mouths; and the same supernatural agency would be as visible in their discourses, as in their miracles: after which explanation of the cause, we need not be surprised at the effect, which the Acts of the Apostles in repeated instances shew to have followed, in the fulfilment of the prediction in question. The admirable specimens of Christian eloquence, which

there occur, so pregnant and sublime in the matter, so just and cogent in the argument, so animated, rapturous, and elevated in the expression, are not the words of the mouth which pronounces them, but of the Holy Ghost^o.

^o The duty of trusting altogether to the suggestions of the Spirit, vouchsafed at the moment, and in the place, when and where such assistance should be wanted, could scarcely be more strongly impressed on the hearers, than by the words of the injunction themselves; which, strictly construed, imply, that they were not to study or premeditate what to say, or how to defend themselves, even when they and their adversaries were on the way together to the tribunal, before which they must shortly have to answer.

The conduct which Christian orators were thus commanded to pursue, was, consequently, very different not only from what human prudence itself might have suggested, but also from the example set them by the practice of the orators of antiquity generally. Considering the frequency of the occasions, when they might reckon, with presumptive certainty, on being obliged to answer publicly for themselves and their religion; and also the necessary similarity of one of these occasions to another; nothing at first sight would seem more natural, or more obviously the dictate of human prudence, than that those, who might so reasonably calculate on being repeatedly placed in situations like these, should prepare themselves long beforehand, in the best manner they could, against such emergencies; should settle in their minds the form, the matter, the mode, the topics of the defences, proper for such occasions; should provide themselves as it were with a standing formulary of self-defence, and store their memories with standing arguments, applicable to almost every case of the kind. The example of the teachers and professors of the popular rhetoric of the day, if they were disposed to follow that, would teach them to do the same thing. These systems of rhetoric, numerous as they were, and different from each other, in circumstantial respects, as they were, had all the same object in view; to qualify the orator trained after their manner, to speak, at a moment's notice, and on any sub-

The connection of this particular injunction with the general topic of prediction, the fact and progress of persecution antecedently, is twofold ; partly as it makes provision for a special emergency, arising out of that fact, and pressing most on a certain class of the professors of Christianity, its evangelists or public ministers ; and partly because the instruments in the causation of this emergency, were the

ject. Aristotle's definition of the art of rhetoric, as taught in his own system, would apply to any of the rest ; as a *δύναμις τοῦ πορίσαι λόγους*, a *δύναμις περὶ τοῦ δοθέντος εὐρεῖν λόγους*, a *δύναμις τοῦ θεωρηῖσαι περὶ ἕκαστον τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν*, or the like. His copious and minute collections of *εἶδη* and *τόποι*, were intended, if such an effect was possible, to comprehend within a given compass all conceivable arguments on all conceivable subjects, which, in the exercise of the orator's vocation, could come under discussion ; and so to prepare him at all points, and for every emergency. On some of these subjects, which were of more usual occurrence than others, so as to have the nature of *loci communes*, he directs him to be provided with the most pertinent topics, for or against the subject, duly arranged, and committed to memory ; which he was to produce when the occasion served. Of their speeches, too, distributed as they were into the proœm, the narration, the proof, the peroration, or the like—such portions as were more or less the same in all, it was usual to have lying by, in a variety of forms, differently modified ; one or other of which might be used on almost every occasion. Thus, among the extant works of Demosthenes, there is a collection of *προοίμια*, or proœms ; as so many possible modes of introducing or beginning a speech, before coming to the particular subject under discussion. In like manner, there might be a variety of forms for concluding a speech, that is, of the epilogus or peroration. In short, to such a degree of system had the art of rhetoric been reduced, by this time, that with the exception of the part belonging to the head of the *δύγησις* and the *πίστις*, (and not the whole even of either of those, respectively,) an orator of antiquity might have had a speech ready for any occasion, almost before he knew for what it was wanted.

same as in the first production of the general fact; the unbelieving Jews, the same class of the opponents of the religion, with whom its overt persecution first began, and by whom it was most systematically carried on, being they who should hale its confessors and apologists, not only before their own courts of justice, but before foreign tribunals, the judgment seats of governors and kings^p. The connection of the other particular direction with the end and purpose of the whole, has been also pointed out. We may observe, then, upon this second part of the first division in common, that its several particulars appear to have come to pass not only with an exact conformity between the prediction and the matter of fact, in each instance, but also between the order of the prediction and the order of the event; whence, we may infer, that in the preceding member also, the order of the prophecy was the order of the event. Again, that as these are matters of fact properly relating to the believing Jews; the former were matters of fact properly concerning the unbelieving Jews. And lastly, that, referred to the event of the approaching visitation, all these particulars might possess the nature, and answer to the intention of signs, to notify it and to forerun it, as well as the events of the former classes; the only difference being, that this description of prognostics was supplied by the private history of the Hebrew Christian church, the other by the public history of the Jewish state and nation. The principle too of the significancy of either class of signs was the same in general; partly, certain or positive; partly, moral or presumptive; certain and positive as derived from

^p Vide supra, page 275.

the express assurance of the speaker himself, that such signs should have such a signification—moral and presumptive, as there was a natural fitness in the signs themselves to possess such a signification. The calamities which befell the Jews from time to time, were not more calculated to convince any reflecting mind that God was displeased with them, and that worse was still to be apprehended from his displeasure ; than the evils which happened to the disciples, occasioned as they were, to satisfy them that the Avenger of wrongs must in the end interfere for their redress. Meanwhile the experience of their own continued protection from the partial judgments thus brought upon their country, would serve as an earnest, and do much to establish the consolatory assurance, of their ultimate preservation amidst the last and greatest of these visitations, yet to come.

There is still another particular, belonging to this second member of the first division of the prophecy, which would have required to be enumerated as the sixth in order, if I had not purposely reserved it for distinct consideration by itself. The truth is, though mentioned in the same enumeration of events with the rest—from the nature of the thing predicted, it stands independent of them ; and though running parallel with them for the same period of time, it belongs to no one point of the interval more than another ; it makes a part neither of the local history of the Jews, nor of the local history of the Hebrew Christian church, and yet it is connected with both, and was as likely beforehand to find a place in the same prophetic survey of the future, as either of them. The fact in question is the propagation and

progress of the Gospel, among the Gentiles ; which, it is predicted, should begin and go forward all this time ; and which we know to have been carried on and effected exclusively *by means* of the believing, and principally, if not indeed exclusively, (for the period in question,) *against* the opposition of the unbelieving Jews.

Upon this prediction, we may observe first, that a comparison of St. Matthew with St. Mark will shew it was twice distinctly stated, first at the beginning of this part of the discourse, Mark xiii. 10, a second time at the end, Matthew xxiv. 14 ; the difference between which statements is simply that the former gives us what was first said about the event in *general* terms, the latter what was finally added with somewhat more of *special* explanation ; our Saviour having first joined together the two leading events of the Christian history, during this period, the persecution of his church at home, and the propagation of his church abroad, as destined to begin together, or nearly so^p—and to accompany each other ever after ; and equally to answer the end designed by the prediction of both in common ; afterwards having passed to the particular notice of each in its turn, beginning with the former as the earlier in point of time, and ending with the latter, because its fulfilment from the nature of the case, (in the *whole* of the effect predicted at least,) must be the latest and last thing of all.

Secondly, we may observe, that like the rest of the particulars predicted in reference to the private or local history of the Christian church among the

^p As indeed they actually did. See the note *supra*, 273. 279.

Jews, through the contemporary period; this prediction also, in reference to the gradual progress of the Gospel abroad, was intended to be a sign and document of the several stages in the approach of the great national visitation at last—in the observance and construction of which, accordingly, the Hebrew Christians were as much interested, as in noting and applying the rest. We may infer this, both from the adverb of time, “first,” coupled with the prediction of the fact in St. Mark’s account of it, and still more from the expressive addition, “And “then will the end come,” subjoined to it in St. Matthew’s. The end could not arrive *before* this prediction in particular had been fulfilled; it could not be delayed *after* it had. The destruction of Jerusalem, consequently, was not yet to be apprehended before the Gospel had been every where preached to the Gentiles; nor its continued immunity from destruction to be much longer reckoned upon, when that event should be known to have come to pass.

Nor could there be any prognostic of the future, it must be owned, better calculated to serve the purpose of a sign, possessing always a certain virtue or significancy as such, but gradually increasing in virtue, and becoming more significant as a sign, in proportion as the thing presignified by it drew nigh—than this in particular: none—the effect of which would be to regulate the judgment of the observer with more precision, at every period of the approach of the event, to alarm his apprehensions more effectually at the proper time, and to allay his fears, by the certainty of continued security, before it. While the publication or profession

of the Gospel was still confined to the precincts of Jerusalem—or even to the local extent of Judæa ; when it had yet comprehended within its pale no more than the interjacent region of Samaria ; when it had only just been thrown open to the Gentiles (between the last of which events, dated with the conversion of Cornelius, and the first, the interval was eleven or twelve years—dated with the first circuit of St. Paul to the Gentiles, it was fourteen years⁹) ; whatever passing events might appear to portend, there would be in the knowledge of this fact, a positive ground of conviction to the Hebrew Christian, that as yet he had nothing to fear. The catastrophe of his devoted country, terrible as it might be to contemplate, was still in the womb of time ; its future witnesses were not yet established in every community under the sun : and in the midst of public agitation and of private distress, in imminent daily jeopardy for a singularly turbulent, and generally disastrous period, the Hebrew Christian might confidently rely on the continuance and security of the existing state of things. But when, after the first overture of the Gospel to the Gentiles on a large and indiscriminate scale, within an incredibly short period of time, the fulness was daily pouring in, the door of faith was daily crowded with the influx of converts, Christian apostles had carried the glad tidings of salvation into every land, Christian churches had taken root and were flourishing among every community ; the momentous inference, which our Saviour had authorized the Christian Jew to deduce from this fact, could no longer be deferred ;

⁹ Vide my Diss. vol. i. Diss. xiii. 562. sqq.

the end of his own state and nation, the dissolution of the civil and religious polity of his country, must be at hand, for the Gospel had been preached “in all the world.”

And if by the words, “in all the world,” (ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ,) we were to understand no more to be meant than the compass of the Roman empire, while we should be borne out in such a construction by classical usage and authority—the correspondence of the event with the prediction would become, in that case, too notorious to require to be pointed out. Between the time of St. Paul’s first mission to the Gentiles from Antioch, A. D. 44, and the time of writing his epistle to the Romans, from Corinth or Cenchreæ, A. D. 56, by his own individual exertions round about from Jerusalem, as far as up to Illyricum, he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ; not too upon a foundation, in any instance, already laid, but upon a foundation, in every instance, of his own laying; that is, not where other Christian Evangelists had preached and introduced the Gospel before him, but where its preaching and introduction for the first time were properly his own work^r. Nor is it improbable that so much of the world as was comprehended within the Roman dominions, should be specially intended by the prophecy in this instance; because, the Roman government being the destined instrument by which the Divine providence designed to act, in bringing the national chastisement upon the Jews; the final end of deferring the time of this visitation until the Gospel had been

^r Rom. xv. 18—21: Cf. 23, 24, 28, 29: 2 Cor. x. 12—16: Coloss. i. 23: Mark xvi. 15: Acts xvi. 6, 7.

preached in all parts of the Roman empire, which is declared to be “for a testimony,” becomes so much the clearer in the intention, and so much the more complete in the fulfilment.

But though we were to understand the phrase in its widest acceptation, of the extent of the anciently known, civilized, and habitable world, there would still be no reason to doubt the fulfilment of the prediction by the event. Had we but an entire history of the acts of all the apostles, and all the evangelists, from first to last, within the period between the Ascension and the commencement of the Jewish war, instead of a narrative which is only for the first seven years of that period, the history of the acts of all, and for the remainder of its accounts is but an history of the labours of one, and that an incomplete history too—we should have seen them simultaneously leaving Judæa, at the proper time, simultaneously labouring every where afterwards, with equal diligence and equal success, above and below the birth-place of Christianity itself, in the north and in the south, in the east and in the west, as far as travelling could direct their steps, and the impulse of an holy zeal, seconded by the blessing and cooperation of power from on high, could speed their course^s.

^s Ecclesiastical tradition has uniformly recorded, that when the pale of the church began to be extended beyond the bounds of Judæa, the work of disseminating the Gospel in other countries, was not carried on by the apostles, without method and system. On the contrary, that the civilized world was distributed among them; and while one of their number, perhaps, alone was still left to preside over the mother church in Judæa, the rest set out in different directions to preach the Gospel, each in the particular province allotted to him. For testimonies to this

It is to be observed too, that the truth of the prophecy would be satisfied, the end proposed by the fact would still be attained, if the Gospel simply obtained admission in any quarter, before the destruction of Jerusalem, whatever success might afterwards betide it there; if it had been offered, though it might not have been received; if it had been planted, though it might not have taken root. The purpose of this preliminary fact, to serve as a witness or testimony—construed according to the declared scope and tendency of the prophecy in general—could not be merely to warn the Gentiles to turn from vanities to the living God, to renounce those systems of religious error and delusion, with all their practical enormities, in which they had been bred, in order to receive in their stead a true faith, and a pure morality; but much more to vindicate in the eyes of the whole world the justice of the divine dealings, both past and future, towards his own people the Jews: to the nature and effect of which purpose, it was obviously necessary that the propagation of Christianity previously should be as wide and universal, as the dispersion of the Jews themselves, that is, throughout the civilized world ^t. The over-

effect, I refer the reader to my former work, vol. i. Diss. ii. 118, sqq. Supplementary Diss. 350—353. Cf. vol. ii. Diss. i. 78—80. Supplem. Diss. 458—460.

^t It would be almost an endless task to collect the testimonies on record, to the fact of the universal dispersion of the Jews, from the time of the first captivity downwards, to the Christian era. Speaking of such of his countrymen, as returned with Ezra, B. C. 458. in contradistinction to those who stayed behind, Josephus observes, Ant. Jud. xi. v. 2: *ὁ δὲ πᾶς λαὸς τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν κατὰ χώραν ἔμεινε. διὰ καὶ δύο φυλὰς εἶναι συμμέβηκεν ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης. Ῥωμαίους ἱπακοίονσας· αἱ δὲ δέκα φυλαὶ πέμν*

ture of Christianity to the Gentiles, everywhere—wherein was included the privilege of becoming the

εἰσὶν Εὐφράτου ἕως δεῦρο, μυριάδες ἄπειροι, καὶ ἀριθμῷ γνωσθῆναι μὴ δυνάμεναι. To these did Josephus address his first edition of the History of the War; which he composed in the vernacular Hebrew, Bell. Proœm. i. 5. To the same, as we learn from the speech of Titus, Bell. vi. vi. 2. 1012. *ad calc.* the Jews of Judæa made overtures, at the outset of the war, to persuade them to join in their revolt (*πρεσβείαι μὲν ὑμῶν πρὸς τοὺς ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην ἐπὶ νεωτερισμῷ κ', τ. λ.*) which is farther confirmed by the Proœm of the History of the War, 2: *ἐπειδὴ Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν ἅπαν τὸ ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην ὀμόφυλον ἡμῖν συνεπαρθήσεσθαί σφισιν ἤλπισαν.* So also in the speech of Agrippa, Bell. ii. xvi. 4. 484: *εἰ μὴ τις ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην ἐκτείνει τὰς ἐλπίδας, καὶ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Ἀδιαβηνῆς ὀμοφύλους οἴεται προσάμυνειν.*

One of the arguments of Agrippa, on this occasion, to dissuade the Jews of Jerusalem from their rash purpose of going to war with the Roman government, is taken from the consideration of the danger to which they were thereby exposing the rest of their countrymen throughout the empire: *Ibid.* p. 487: *ὁ δὲ κίνδυνος οὐ τῶν ἐνθάδε μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὰς ἄλλας πόλεις κατοικούντων. οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης δῆμος, ὃ μὴ μοῖραν ὑμετέραν ἔχων.* Josephus himself observes, Bell. vii. iii. 3: *τὸ γὰρ Ἰουδαίων γένος πολὺ μὲν κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην παρῆσπαρται τοῖς ἐπιχωρίοις· πλείστον δὲ τῇ Συρίᾳ, κατὰ τὴν γειννίασιν ἀναμεμιγμένον, ἔξαιρέτως δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀντιοχείας ἦν πολὺν, διὰ τὸ τῆς πόλεως μέγεθος, μάλιστα δ' αὐτοῖς ἀδεῆ τὴν ἐκεῖ κατοίκησιν οἱ μετ' Ἀντίοχον βασιλεῖς παρέσχον, κ', τ. λ.*

Let the reader peruse the list of Jews, Acts ii. 5—11: devout men, from every nation under heaven, who were assembled at Jerusalem, celebrating the feast of Pentecost, U. C. 783. A. D. 30. when the Holy Ghost fell on the apostles; to be convinced of the universality of the dispersion: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, or Persians, the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene and its neighbourhood, Cretes, Arabians, and Romans. The Acts of the Apostles shew that Christian evangelists could travel no where, after they set out on their errand for the propagation of the Gospel, beyond Judæa, without finding Jews and syna-

people of God—would intimate everywhere the fact that the Jews—before his chosen and peculiar people

gogues. The various edicts preserved by Josephus, in favour of the Jews, whether from the Syromacedonian princes, or from the municipal authorities of particular places, or from the Roman government, addressed to such and such cities, all attest the wide spread diffusion of this race: see *Ant. Jud.* xiv. x: xvi. vi. The tribute too, remitted annually to the sacred treasury from all parts of the world, proves the same thing: vide my *Diss.* vol. ii. *Diss.* viii. part iv. 341: the numbers also, stated to have been massacred in different places out of Judæa, in the disputes between them and the Gentile inhabitants of the same localities: some of which numbers we considered elsewhere: see *supra*, page 239, 244, &c.

Philo *Judæus*, ii. 524. 4. adv. Flaccum, writes thus: Ἰουδαίους γὰρ χώρα μία διὰ πολυανθρωπίαν οὐ χωρεῖ ἥς αἰτίας ἔνεκα τὰς πλείστας καὶ εὐδαιμονεστάτας τῶν ἐν Εὐρώπῃ καὶ Ἀσία, κατὰ τε νήσους καὶ ἠπείρους ἐκνέμονται· μητρόπολιν μὲν τὴν ἱερόπολιν ἡγούμενοι, καθ' ἣν ἴδρυται ὁ τοῦ Ἰψίστου Θεοῦ νεὼς ἅγιος· ἂς δ' ἔλαχον ἐκ πατέρων καὶ πάππων, καὶ προπάππων, καὶ τῶν ἔτι ἄνω προγόνων, οἰκεῖν ἕκαστοι, πατρίδας νομίζοντες ἐν αἷς ἐγεννήθησαν καὶ ἐγράφησαν. εἰς ἐνίας δὲ καὶ κτιζόμενας εἰθὺς ἦλθον ἀποικίαν στειλάμενοι, τοῖς κτίσταις χαριζόμενοι. *Ibid.* 523. 30, he tells us not less than a million inhabited Egypt. Strabo, too, as quoted by Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* xiv. vii. 2. speaking of the four φυλαὶ, which inhabited Cyrene, in the time of Sylla and Mithridates, gave this account of the Jews in particular: αὕτη δ' εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν ἤδη παρεληλύθει, καὶ τόπον οἰκῆσαι ἰσχυρῶς εἰρῆναι τῆς οἰκουμένης, ὅς οὐ παραδέδεται τοῦτο τὸ φύλον, μηδ' ἐπικρατεῖται ἐπ' αὐτοῦ. τὴν τε Αἴγυπτον καὶ τὴν Κυρηναίαν ἅτε τῶν αὐτῶν ἡγεμόνων τυχοῦσαν, τῶν τε ἄλλων σιχνὰ ζῆλωσαι συνέβη, καὶ δὴ τὰ συντάγματα τῶν Ἰουδαίων θρέψαι διαφερόντως, καὶ σκευάζησθαι χρώμενα τοῖς πατρίοις τῶν Ἰουδαίων νόμοις. He then proceeds to speak more particularly of their privileges in Egypt and Alexandria, in which he is fully supported by Philo; Cf. ii. 525. 26. 527. 44.

The following representation, therefore, which occurs Philo, ii. 537. 10. *De virtutibus*, in the letter of Agrippa to Caius Cæsar, relating to his attempt to set up his statue in the temple at Jerusalem, however highly coloured it may at first sight seem to be, yet after what has been thus said, ought not to be considered

—were no longer so; the bitter and unrelenting hostility of the Jews to the Gospel, which accompanied its overture everywhere, would intimate the grounds of the fact, or why they had ceased to be so. The knowledge of the antecedent Gospel history, and especially of the past and present history of the mother church in Judæa, would still further explain the fact, by shewing that the *crimen delicti* which deserved to be so resented, had been long contracted; that the hostility which so pertinaciously accompanied every subsequent step in the advancement of the Gospel elsewhere, had been as active and as indefatigable to stifle it if possible in the birth, and to nip the bud of its progress in its own native country itself.

The fact, then, that the Jews, so long the peculiar and favoured people of God, by rejecting his Gospel had rejected him, being too notorious everywhere, to

an exaggerated statement, with reference to this subject of the dispersion of the Jews: *περὶ δὲ τῆς ἱεροπόλεως τὰ προσήκοντά μοι λεκτέον. αὕτη, καθάπερ ἔφην, ἐμὴ μὲν ἐστὶ πατρίς, μητρόπολις δὲ οὐ μίᾳ χώρᾳ Ἰουδαίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν πλείστων, διὰ τὰς ἀποικίας ἃς ἐξέπεμψεν ἐπὶ καιρῶν, εἰς μὲν τὰς ὁμόρους, Αἴγυπτον, Φοινίκην, Συρίαν, τὴν τε ἄλλην, καὶ τὴν Κοίλην προσαγορευομένην· εἰς δὲ τὰς πόρρω διφκισμένας, Παμφυλίαν, Κιλικίαν, τὰ πολλὰ τῆς Ἀσίας ἄχρι Βιθυνίας, καὶ τῶν τοῦ Πόντου μυχῶν, τὸν αὐτὸν μὲν τρόπον καὶ εἰς Εὐρώπην, Θετταλίαν, Βοιωτίαν, Μακεδονίαν, Αἰτωλίαν, τὴν Ἀττικὴν, Ἄργος, Κόρινθον, τὰ πλείστα καὶ ἄριστα Πελοποννήσου. καὶ οὐ μόνον αἱ ἥπειροι μεστὰι τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν ἀποικῶν εἰσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ νήσων αἱ δοκιμώταται, Εὐβοία, Κύπρος, Κρήτη. καὶ σιωπῶ τὰς πέραν Εὐφράτου· πᾶσαι γὰρ ἔξω μέρους βραχέος (Βαβυλῶνος, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων σατραπειῶν αἱ ἀρετῶσαν ἔχουσι τὴν ἐν κύκλῳ γῆν) Ἰουδαίους ἔχουσιν οἰκήτορας. ὥστε ἂν μεταλάβῃ σου τῆς εὐμενείας ἢ ἐμὴ πατρίς, οὐ μία πόλις, ἀλλὰ καὶ μυρία τῶν ἄλλων ἐνεργετοῦνται, καθ' ἕκαστον κλίμα τῆς οἰκουμένης ἰδρυθεῖσαι, τὸ Εὐρωπαϊον, τὸ Ἀσιανόν, τὸ Λιβυκόν, τὸ ἐν ἡπείροις, τὸ ἐν νήσοις, παράλόν τε καὶ μεσόγειον, κ', τ. λ. Cf. ii. 568. 26—569. 22; 574. 5—30; 577. 39—578. 14.*

be disputed ; the transfer of Gospel privileges to the Gentiles was an equally visible proof that God had rejected them : and as a direct consequence from this fact, and from the grounds on which it was placed, the justice of the punishment which still awaited them—the equity of the Divine proceedings not only in what had been taken from them, but in what was about to be brought upon them—would everywhere be equally demonstrable. For as there would be no part of the civilized world, after the universal diffusion of the Gospel, where Gentile converts would not have sensible proof from their own experience, both of the original crime of the Jews, in the rejection of the Messiah, and of the further aggravation of it, in their systematic persecution of his religion ; so, after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the infliction of the other calamities upon their country, there would be no part of the world where Gentile Christians would not have an equally clear proof how terribly and severely the Divine justice had resented both offences at their hands : and yet there should be none, where laying the crime and the punishment together, and balancing the demerits of the sufferers against the rigour of their treatment, the church should not have cause to confess that the ways of God, even in an extreme case like this, were just and righteous ; the enormous magnitude of the punishment was but commensurate to the enormity of the guilt which had provoked it^u.

^u The allusions to the futurity of persecution, which occur in the course of the Gospel history, in the shape of predictions thereof by our Saviour, are all of such a kind as plainly to imply that the agents in such persecutions either solely or principally would be the unbelieving Jews, as much as that the sul-

The second general division of the prophecy was comprehended between verses 15 and 28 of St. Mat-

jects of them, first and properly would be his own disciples among their countrymen. Vide Matt. v. 11, 12. Harm. ii. 23. (Cf. Luke vi. 22, 23. Harm. iii. 5.): Matt. x. 16—18. 23—25. Harm. iii. 26 : Luke xi. 49—51. Harm. iv. 31 ; xii. 11. Harm. iv. 32 : Matt. xxiii. 33—36. Harm. iv. 77 : John xv. 17—25 ; xvi. 1—4. 33. Harm. iv. 90.

Acts iii. 1, 2. 5—21, very early in the history of the Acts of the Apostles, subsequently to the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost preceding, we find two of the apostles, Peter and John, brought before the sanhedrim of the Jews, and though not treated, at that time, with any personal indignity, yet commanded to desist from preaching in the name of Christ, and threatened with the vengeance of the sanhedrim if they persisted in doing so. Soon after, Acts v. 17—40, we find the whole body of the apostles, first imprisoned by the authority of the sanhedrim, and kept in ward, or meant to be kept in ward, (had they not been miraculously delivered from custody by the instrumentality of an angel,) a whole night ; and then examined the next morning before the council, scourged, and dismissed with threats of worse punishment, if they continued to persist in the work of their ministry. Acts vi. 8—vii. 60, we have the account of the beginning and first effects of the first persecution of Christianity, properly so called ; the time of which (see my Diss. vol. i. Diss. xiii. 541. sqq.) was U. C. 790. A. D. 37. The whole congregation of believers in Jerusalem were the subjects of this violence ; the first martyr to it being Stephen the deacon. It is needless to observe, that it was both begun and carried on solely by the unbelieving Jews, against their believing countrymen ; all of whom, with the exception of the apostles, were compelled to quit Jerusalem, and to seek an asylum elsewhere. Acts viii. 1—ix. 19, gives us the history of the active part taken in this persecution, by Saul of Tarsus ; up to the time of his conversion, when he was on the way to Damascus to bring bound from thence to Jerusalem, such believing Jews of the mother country, as might be found there, subject to the authority of the sanhedrim. Acts ix. 23, after the beginning of his ministry as a preacher of the Gospel, at Damascus, (U. C. 791—U. C. 793,)

thew's account ; its object in general being to return an answer to the second question, "What is

the Jews of Damascus conspired there to take away his life : and Acts ix. 29, on his return to Jerusalem, for the first time after his conversion—(U.C. 793. spring) the Hellenists, or Jews of the Dispersion there, at the time, conspired to do the same.

Acts xii. 1—19, we have an account of the persecution begun and carried on, U. C. 796. A. D. 43, against the church of Jerusalem, by Herod Agrippa ; one victim to which was James, the son of Zebedee, and another, intended to have fallen a sacrifice to it, but for his miraculous deliverance from prison the night before the day appointed for his execution, the morning after the close of the Jewish feast of unleavened bread in that year—was Peter. The motive assigned to this act of the king's, so far as concerned Peter, viz. that he sought to add his death to that of James, because by the latter he had pleased his subjects the Jews, and by the other might expect to please them still more—is implicitly an argument that he began the persecution originally for the express purpose of pleasing the Jews, his subjects ; and consequently that their well-known hatred to Christianity is chargeable with the effects of this violence, as much as with every thing of like kind that had yet preceded it.

Acts xiii. 8, at Salamis in Cyprus, U. C. 797. A. D. 44. in the course of St. Paul's first circuit to the Gentiles, the party who endeavoured to prejudice the proconsul Sergius Paulus, against the reception of the Gospel, was Barjesus, a Jew. Ch. xiii. 45—50, at Antioch in Pisidia ; xiv. 2. 4. 5, at Iconium, in the course of the same circuit, the opposition which Paul and Barnabas experienced, the ill-will excited against them and the Gospel, among the Gentiles, and the risk to which their personal safety was exposed in each of those places, originated entirely with the Jews : who having procured their forcible ejection from Antioch, and threatened them with stoning at Iconium, at last effected their purpose, in conjunction with the people of the place, by stoning Paul at Lystra, (whither they followed him from Antioch and Iconium,) and haling his body out of the city, and leaving it there, as they imagined, dead, Acts xiv. 6—20.

Acts xvi. 19—40, in St. Paul's second circuit, U. C. 802.

“ the sign of thy appearing and presence ? ” its particular purpose, in one of its subdivisions, from verse

A. D. 49, the treatment which he and Silas met with at Philippi, was certainly not due to the influence or instigation of the Jews : and this is the only instance in which such an effect as the persecution of the ministers of the Gospel, historically recorded in the Acts, is not mediately or immediately to be referred to them. It seems indeed that the Jews were not numerous at Philippi ; that they had no synagogue there, but instead of that, only a place where prayer was wont to be made, that is, a *proseucha*, by the river side, without the city. Philippi too was a Roman colony ; governed by *στρατηγοὶ*, prætors, or municipal *duumviri*, answering to the consuls at Rome ; and U. C. 802. A. D. 49, when Paul came to that place, it is not improbable the Jews were in disgrace with the Roman government, and had already been put under the ban of the edict of Claudius, issued against their countrymen in Rome and Italy, and commanding them to depart thence.

At Thessalonica, however, the place, among the quarters visited next by Paul, where the Jews of those parts had their synagogue—Acts xvii. 1—10, he met with persecution begun and fomented by the Jews, which drove him and Silas by night to Berea. The Jews of Thessalonica pursued him to Berea, and drove him thence to Athens ; Acts xvii. 13—15.

Acts xviii. 1—17, the history of Paul’s residence at Corinth, on occasion of his first visit to that city, U. C. 803—804. A. D. 50—51, shews that all the opposition which he encountered, and all the danger to which he was personally exposed, during that time, proceeded from the Jews. In like manner too, Acts xix. 1—41, the history of his first visit to, and residence at Ephesus, U. C. 806—808. A. D. 53—55, (especially as compared with the testimony of Acts xx. 19.) proves that the opposition, and risk of like kind, encountered by him there, (not excepting even the last and worst instance of all, immediately preceding his departure, when his life was exposed to such imminent danger from the commotion excited by Demetrius and the silversmiths,) were mainly attributable to the Jews.

Acts xx. 3, when he was preparing to leave Corinth, U. C. 809. A. D. 56, on his last journey up to Jerusalem ; we are inci-

15—22, inclusive, being to declare what this sign should be; in the other, from verse 23 to 28, inclu-

dentally told that the discovery of a conspiracy against his life by the Jews, compelled him to change his intention of going by sea, and to retrace his steps into Macedonia, by land.

After his arrival at Jerusalem, (Pentecost, in the same year,) Acts xxi. 17, to the close of the history of the Acts, by his arrival and continuance in imprisonment at Rome, Acts xxviii. 16 sqq. it cannot be necessary to recapitulate the particulars of the intermediate events, to shew that nothing befell Paul, in the shape of opposition, of personal danger—in one word, of persecution—but through the agency of the unbelieving Jews. His old enemies, the Jews of Asia, Acts xxii. 27, were they who stirred up the violence of the people against him in the temple, first of all; from whose hands he was rescued only in time to escape with his life, by the intervention of Claudius Lysias, captain of the Roman force, stationed at all times in Jerusalem, and in the vicinity of the temple, but especially at the seasons of the national festivals, to keep guard there, and to quell any commotion which might arise amongst the people, at such times. The next day Paul was examined before the sanhedrim, and unjustly smitten by command of the presiding high-priest, Ananias, Acts xxii. 30, &c. Acts xxiii. 12, more than forty Jews bind themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink, till they have killed Paul: xxiv. 1, 2, Paul is tried before Felix, his accusers being the Jews, and their authorities: xxv. 3, the Jews conspire against his life, and make interest with Festus, who had just succeeded to Felix, U. C. 811. A. D. 58, to cause Paul to be removed from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, intending to waylay and murder him on the road. Acts xxv. 6—12, Paul is tried before Festus at Cæsarea, as he had been before Felix, his accusers as before being the Jews: and as the only alternative left him, to escape from the risk of being sent to Jerusalem from Cæsarea, to undergo his trial again before Festus there, is constrained to appeal to Cæsar; in consequence of which appeal, Festus decided to send him. Cf. also Acts xxviii. 19, after his arrival at Rome, to shew that his being sent thither was in consequence of an appeal which he had been obliged to make against his own countrymen, to Cæsar.

sive, to declare what it should not be. These points it is necessary to explain more at large.

A comparison of the Epistles with the Acts would prove that in numerous instances the allusions to persecution, &c. which occur there, are to be understood of such violence and ill usage as the Gospel and its professors had experienced, and were experiencing, at the hands of the Jews more especially: Vide 1 Thess. ii. 14—16; iii. 3, 4; 2 Thess. i. 4—7; iii. 2: 1 Cor. iv. 11—13; vii. 26; xvi. 9; 2 Cor. i. 4—10; iv. 8—12. 16, 17; vi. 4—10; vii. 5; xi. 24, 25; Gal. iii. 4; v. 29: Rom. v. 3; viii. 18. 35, 36; xv. 30, 31: Philipp. i. 28—30: Hebrews x. 32—34. 36; xii. 3, 4: 2 Tim. i. 8. 12. 15, 16; ii. 9, 10, 11, 12; iii. 11, 12; iv. 16, 17: James i. 2—4. 12: v. 7—1; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7; ii. 19, 20; iii. 14. 17; iv. 12, 13; v. 9, 10.

The origin of the calumnies against Christianity, which we considered above, page 282. sqq., so early propagated and so long current—if Christian testimonies are to be believed—must be ascribed in part to their hostility; which, in producing this effect, went to work in a very deliberate and systematic manner—dispatching emissaries to disseminate such calumnies, and to excite a general prejudice against the religion, in all parts of the world. Thus Justin M. Dialog. 170. 14—171. 10: οὐχ οὕτως γὰρ τὰ ἄλλα ἔθνη εἰς ταύτην τὴν ἀδικίαν τὴν εἰς ἡμᾶς καὶ τὸν Χριστὸν ἐνέχονται, ὅσον ὑμεῖς, οἱ κακείνοις τῆς κατὰ τοῦ Δικαίου καὶ ἡμῶν, τῶν ἀπ' ἐκείνου, κακῆς προλήψεως αἴτιοι ὑπάρχετε. μετὰ γὰρ τὸ σταυρῶσαι ὑμᾶς ἐκείνον . . . ἐπειδὴ ἐγνώκατε αὐτὸν ἀναστάντα ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ ἀναβάντα εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν . . . οὐ μόνον οὐ μετενοήσατε ἐφ' οἷς ἐπράξατε κακοῖς, ἀλλὰ ἄνδρας ἐκλεκτοὺς ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐκλεξάμενοι τότε ἐξέπεμψατε εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, λέγοντες αἵρεσιν ἄθεον Χριστιανῶν πεφηνέναι, καταλέγοντες ταῦτα ἄπερ καθ' ἡμῶν οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες ἡμᾶς πάντες λέγουσιν, ὥστε κ', τ. λ. So also, pars secunda, 368. 16—369. 5: καὶ οὐ μόνον οὐ μετενοήσατε . . . ἀλλ' ὡς προεῖπον, ἄνδρας χειροτονήσαντες ἐκλεκτοὺς, εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐπέμψατε, κηρύσσοντας ὅτι αἵρεσίς τις ἄθεος καὶ ἄνομος ἐγήγερται, ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ τίνος Γαλιλαίου πλάνου . . . κατειπόντες δεδιδαχέναι καὶ ταῦτα ἄπερ κατὰ τῶν ὁμολογούντων Χριστὸν καὶ διδάσκαλον καὶ υἱὸν Θεοῦ εἶναι, παντὶ γένει ἀνθρώπων ἄθεα καὶ ἄνομα καὶ ἀνόσια λέγετε. κ', τ. λ. Cf. 387. 17—21.

Ad-

First, without entering into the inquiry what further meaning the event here spoken of as the ap-

Admitting the truth of this statement, we may suppose such emissaries were first sent to their countrymen of the Dispersion, which would in fact be over all the world, to prejudice their minds against the reception of Christianity, when it came among them; and through them, that of the Gentile communities in the midst of whom they lived. If so, such emissaries would perhaps not be sent before Christianity began to be preached out of Judæa; but they might, as soon as that was the case.

Origen too ascribes to the same source the origin of the calumnies in question; Opera i. 651. C. Contra Cels. vi. 27. Jerome, after Eusebius, repeats the statement of Justin, iii. 126. *ad med.* in Isai. xviii.: Quod in principio fidei Christianæ ad totas gentes epistolas miserint (Judæi) ne susciperent passionem Christi, et miserint usque ad Æthiopiā et occidentalem plagam, totumque orbem hujus blasphemiae disseminatione compleverint. So likewise Theophylact, iii. 185. D. E. in Actus, xx v. and 316. E. *ibid.*

Justin repeatedly asserts, that the Jews made a practice of pronouncing aloud, in their synagogues, immediately after their prayers, and by command of their archi-synagogi, a curse on such as believed in Christ; and of railing at, and blaspheming Christ himself; Dialog. 169. 19—25: 232. 14—19: 343. 31—34: 347. 6—8: 421. 19—24. Origen also, iii. 254. F. in Jeremian, Hom. xviii., observes; εἰσελθε εἰς τὰς τῶν Ἰουδαίων συναγωγὰς, καὶ ἰδὲ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὑπ' αὐτῶν τῇ γλώσσῃ τῆς βλασφημίας μαστιγούμενον. Cf. Comm. in Matth. Series 123. 918. F. Eriphanius informs us they did this thrice a day, at morning, noon, and evening, under the name of the sect of the Nazarenes, or at least as against the sect of the Nazarene Christians in particular; saying each time, ὅτι ἐπικατάρσασαι ὁ θεὸς τοὺς Ναζωραίους: i. 124. C.: Nazaraei, cap. 9. So likewise Jerome, in various places; iii. 53. *ad calc.*: 353. *ad princ.*: 377. *ad med.*: 1378. *ad calc.*

According to Justin, Apol. i. 49. line 29, Barchochab, in the Jewish war, under Hadrian, exposed the Christians, but the Christians only, to the most exquisite tortures, to make them deny Christ; and as Eusebius, Chron. pars ii. 237. *ad annum*

pearing and presence of Jesus Christ (*παρουσία*) might possibly have; we may obviously take it for granted that in one of its senses, and in the apprehension of the inquirers at least, the event denoted by this appearing and presence must be the same with the event denoted by the *end*. If then the order of the prophecy, at this point of time, passes on to ascertain the period of the end, it passes on to certify the period of the appearing and presence; and so far, to return a direct answer to the second topic of inquiry. And that it does so pass, at this

Abrahami 2149. adds, to compel them to join him in the revolt against the Romans. The will to kill and destroy the Christians, Justin tells us they still retained, and when they had it in their power, they were not slow to give effect to it; Dialog. 422. 15: in which respect their proselytes rivalled their teachers; thus illustrating the truth of our Saviour's declaration, Matt. xxiii. 15. Οἱ δὲ προσήλυτοι, says Justin, οὐ μόνον οὐ πιστεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ διπλότερον ἡμῶν βλασφημοῦσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡμᾶς, τοὺς εἰς ἐκεῖνον πιστεύοντας, καὶ φονεύειν καὶ αἰκίζειν βούλονται· κατὰ πάντα γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐξομοιοῦσθαι σπεύδουσι: Dialog. 399. 22.

The Acta Martyrum, indeed, supply numerous instances of the ever active and virulent hostility of the Jews to the Christian religion, and to its most honoured and distinguished professors. Thus, at the memorable instance of the martyrdom of Polycarp, A. D. 164. (see my Supplementary Diss. Diss. xv.) in clamouring for his death, in collecting the materials for the fire, in which he was to be burnt, in watching his body after death, that it might not come into the hands of the Christians, or meet with Christian burial, the Jews of Smyrna were the most forward of all, and volunteered their services unrequested: Euseb. E. H. iv. 15. 132. D: 133. A: 134. D. See also the Acta of Pionius, A. D. 148. *Ruinart*. 146. capp. 13. 14. For proofs of their disposition towards Christianity in later times still, I refer the reader to Origen, iii. 213. C. in Jerem. Hom. xiv. 8: Cyprian, Epp. 59. p. 126: Hieronym. iv. pars i. 283. *ad med.*

moment, is evident from the words which connect the beginning of this division with the end of the last; "When *therefore* ye see," with, "And then " will the end come." The proximity of the end, and so far of the *παρουσία*, the appearing and presence, being thus presupposed, the object of what follows is to shew by what means it should be known not only to be near, but arrived.

That the object then of what follows must be closely connected with the subject of the appearing and presence in general, can scarcely be disputed; and that it is so connected as actually to define the time of its event, and so to return an answer to the question, What was *the sign* of it, may thus be shewn. A particular fact is specified as something which should be seen to precede; and an inference is directed to be founded upon it as what should be expected to follow. The fact then was specified for the sake of the inference; the prediction of the fact has an use and purpose of which the inference is the interpreter; the fact specified was meant to be the sign, the consequence inferred to be the thing signified. Now the thing thus supposed to be signified is the drawing nigh of the *ἐρήμωσις* or desolation of Jerusalem; the fact which is supposed to imply it, is Jerusalem's being seen beginning to be encircled with armies, or what amounts to the same thing, the abomination of desolation's being seen standing in an holy place, or standing where it ought not: and the former of these things being clearly identical with the event called the end, and so far with that of the appearing and presence also, the same fact which serves as a sign that the end was come, must serve as a sign of the appearing and presence.

Upon the matter of fact which serves to this purpose, we shall observe by and by; at present, assuming only what has now been sufficiently clearly established, that the direct intention of the first member of this second division is to certify not merely the approach of the end in general, but the particular event which should precede it in immediate contiguity, and demonstrate it to be all but come; we may justly remark, that of the occurrences which were to forerun the destruction of Jerusalem—possessing the virtue of signs or harbingers in reference to an event still future—this was beyond a question the most important and deserving of attention, because the most awful and alarming in its signification. The catastrophe which previous intimations had shewn to be at first a great way off, and ever after more or less remote—was declared by this one, to be close at hand; and while former presages, until their common import had received the confirmation of this, the most oracular and momentous of all, were auspices of hope as well as omens of fear—in this one event, when it came to pass, there would be every thing to alarm the apprehensions, nothing to encourage the confidence of the observers, for the security of the existing state of things.

With respect, however, to this particular sign, we may observe, as we did upon the former occasion^y, that it would be indifferent to the use and purpose designed by it, whether it derived its peculiar expressiveness from its own nature, or from the positive appointment of our Lord; provided only it was understood beforehand, that when this antecedent had preceded, such and such a consequence should

^y *Supra* vol. iv. 200, 201.

infallibly follow. With this understanding previously established about it, the fact of such an occurrence would be at once an alarm, to rouse the fears of the believing Jews, and a final document to seal the doom of the unbelieving. Before that time, it would be the wisdom of the disciples to sit still, and watch the kind, and the progress of events, without perturbation, and without the disposition, whatever might appear the temptation, to bestir themselves for immediate escape, as if from impending danger. But *now*, their only means of safety would be the speediness of their flight. Not a moment was to be lost in profiting by the warning, once given. They were to be gone, as men escaping for their lives, and with the utmost of their celerity and dispatch, scarcely sure of effecting that. They were to fly as if pursued by the most instantaneous and destructive of evils, the plague, the earthquake, or the deluge. They were to fly, under whatever circumstances of preparation for flight, the warning notice might surprise them—whether by day or by night, whether asleep or awake, whether sitting or standing, at meat or at work, in the city or in the field, at home or abroad—without one thought except how to be gone by the nearest and readiest way, that was open to escape; whatever sacrifice of property, of local attachment, of social or domestic endearment, of scruples of conscience to themselves, of the risk of offence to others, it might cost them; whatever appearance of danger, in the estimate of human probabilities, might attend their flight—while there was so much more danger in staying behind, or lingering to be gone. They were to cast themselves entirely upon God—with no ground of assurance, but trust

in his protection—with no prospect of an asylum, no hope of sustenance and support, but what his providence might be found to furnish them.

Strong as these injunctions may seem to be, they are but the substance of the particular directions given upon this and on the former occasion, with respect to the contingency of the behaviour of the parties addressed, when the infallible assurance of the near approach of the end should once have been made known to them: and whatsoever opinion may be entertained as to whether they were meant to be literally applicable and literally observed or not, it is evident that they would be eminently calculated to produce the conviction beforehand of two very important truths, which would be found in the moment of need to be eminently useful; viz. that the effect of the catastrophe, when it occurred, in general, should be sudden, indiscriminate, and total; that their own preservation from it in particular, must be the result of the utmost human prudence, and the utmost human diligence, aided after all, and empowered to attain its purpose, by the special interposition of a superior agency.

Into the precise description of the event, which was destined to possess this ominous character as a sign, the necessary inquiry will be found in the note subjoined. The results of that inquiry are all which we need to mention at present; viz. that the fact of Jerusalem's being seen encompassed, or beginning to be encompassed with armies, denotes the fact of its being seen invested, or beginning to be invested, by some besieging army in general; and the fact of

the abomination of desolation's being seen, at the same time, standing upon holy ground, denotes the fact of its being seen invested, or beginning to be invested, by the armies of Rome in particular—whose military ensigns only, as objects of worship to the soldiers, and as bearing the images of their emperors, in the same capacity also, could properly be described by the scriptural name for an idol, that is, an abomination; and as an idol, which under such circumstances, was the accompanying ensign of war—the tutelary genius of the appointed instruments of ravage and destruction—might be further described as the abomination of desolation. From the fact of this event, whensoever it should be seen to have preceded, the hearers of the prophecy are directed to draw the infallible inference that the days of Jerusalem were numbered, and the hour of her desolation was drawn nigh. It is my opinion that the only occurrence of this description, between the time of the delivery of the prophecy, and the fulfilment of the event more especially predicted to follow upon this one fact—which could answer the purpose of a sign of that event, and of a warning to alarm the fears of the observers of it in due time, with a view to their own escape—was the siege of Jerusalem by Cestius Gallus, the president of Syria, A. D. 66, at the outset of the Jewish war. The reasons of this opinion are given below *y*.

y There is some appearance of difference in the terms of the several accounts of this part of the prophecy; which nevertheless admits of being easily explained. St. Mark's *ὄπρου οὐ δεῖ* in all probability was intended to be explanatory of St. Matthew's phrase, *ἐστὼς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ*, as substantially the same with it; or else is a supplement of an omission in the account of the lat-

The substance of the several prophetic particulars comprehended in this first member of the second

ter, which might very well have made part of the words of our Saviour originally, along with *ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ*, and in reference to the same thing. On this principle, the whole of what he may be supposed to have said up to a certain point, will stand as follows : *ὅταν οὖν ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ (or ὑπὸ) Δαυὶδ τοῦ προφήτου, ἐστὼς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ, ὅπου οὐ δεῖ, κ', τ. λ.* And with respect to what follows, though it may be supposed St. Luke's *κυκλομένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων τῆν Ἱερουσαλήμ*, is merely the substitution of an equivalent expression for the *βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως* of the other two ; yet I should rather be inclined to believe that this also was a circumstance of the description specified at the time, which might have been connected with the preceding by the particle *καί*. On this principle our Saviour might have continued, *καὶ κυκλομένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων Ἱερουσαλήμ, τότε ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω, (or what would amount to the same thing, τότε γινῶτε) ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς.*

In the use of such language, as this, *ἐστὼς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ*, there seems to be a reference to the phraseology of Exodus iii. 5 : which is quoted by Stephen also in the Acts, vii. 33 : *λῦσον τὸ ὑπόδημα τῶν ποδῶν σου ὁ γὰρ τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἕστηκας, γῆ ἁγία ἐστίν.* Cf. also Joshua v. 15. Ground, consecrated by the presence of the Deity, for the time, and much more, by his permanent residence and inhabitation, is necessarily to be considered and called, holy, or hallowed, ground. The whole of Judæa was hallowed in this sense, in comparison of the rest of the world, by being chosen to be the peculiar locality of the visible church of God : and the city of Jerusalem was so in comparison with the rest of Judæa, by being selected to be the site of the temple, and consequently the habitation of the Holy Being, worshipped there. In this sense Jerusalem is twice called the "holy city" absolutely, in St. Matthew's Gospel ; once in reference to the time of the Temptation, Matth. iv. 5 : and again, in reference to the time of the crucifixion, or of the resurrection, Matt. xxvii. 53. That this denomination, then, might be given with the utmost propriety, to any quarter in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and especially to the immediate vicinity, and much more to the site, of the temple, while both were still in being, there can be no question ; nor,

general division, may be reduced to the following heads: first, the practical admonitions, subjoined to

consequently, that one or other of these localities in all probability was meant by this mode of describing the spot on which the abomination of desolation was hereafter to be seen erected.

There have been commentators who have thought the words *ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω*, in St. Matthew and St. Mark, were no part of the words of our Saviour originally, but a parenthetic admonition from the writer of the Gospel; thrown in by the way, to direct the attention of the reader of the prophecy, as recorded by them, to this, the most important circumstance of all. I cannot undertake to say that this conjecture is altogether improbable; but it appears to me much more natural to understand these words of what was spoken by our Saviour, in common with the rest of the prophecy; and following as they do, a specific reference to a prediction recorded by one of the prophets of the Old Testament—that they were meant for nothing more than a direction to the reader of that prophecy in its place therein, to remember and understand that the event predicted by it was about to find its accomplishment in the approaching desolation of Jerusalem. It is well known that from the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, at least, if not from an earlier date, the reading of lessons from the prophets made part of the service of the Jewish synagogue; and the same practice was ever after kept up in the Christian church. The prophecies of Daniel would thus be repeatedly read in their turn before the time of the end; and this admonition of our Saviour may imply no more than that as often as that passage in his prophecies, which contains the mention of the abomination in question, whether xi. 31, or xii. 11. or rather, more especially, chapter ix. 26, 27, was recited in the ears of the church, both the readers and the hearers thereof, should mind and understand that its appearance, standing where it ought not, would be the signal of the desolation of Jerusalem, as drawing nigh.

This phrase, the abomination of desolation, does not occur *ῥητῶς* in the place of Daniel referred to; whence it appears, that our Saviour appeals to the sense, rather than the words, of that prophecy. Now from the sense of that prophecy, it is clear that the abomination in question is descriptive of a besieging

the recognition of the fatal sign, and necessary to be observed immediately afterwards, Matt. xxiv.

army, an army commissioned, for the work of destruction, against the city of Jerusalem, and the sanctuary or temple, in particular ; for there it is synonymous with “ the people of the “ prince that should come, and should destroy the city and the “ sanctuary.” The same thing must be understood by the abomination of desolation, here ; a besieging or hostile army of some kind, threatening the safety of Jerusalem in particular.

In the language of Scripture, an abomination is the name for any kind of idol ; but an abomination of desolation can be the name for that description of idol only, which is able to make desolate ; and this can be properly only a military idol of some kind or other ; an idol, either itself an instrument of destruction, or the badge and token of one. The ensigns of an hostile or besieging army might well be so called, if those ensigns were the objects of idolatrous worship. But we do not know that this was true of the military ensigns of any of the nations of antiquity, except the Romans. Among these, the eagles were properly the tutelary divinities of the legions, and worshipped as such ; being enshrined in small temples, like any other object of ancient idolatry : *ὁ γὰρ ἀετὸς ὠνομασμένος*, says Dio, xl. 18 : *ἔστι δὲ νεὸς μικρὸς, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀετὸς χρυσοῦς ἐνίδρυται . . . καὶ αὐτὸν εἰς ἀνήρ ἐπὶ δόρατος μακροῦ, ἐς ὄξυ τὸν στύρακα ἀπηγμένον, ὥστε καὶ ἐς τὸ δάπεδον καταπήγνυσθαι, φέρει.* In like manner, *ib.*, he describes their vexilla, or standards ; *σημεῖον δέ τι τῶν μεγάλων τοῖς ἰστίοις ἐοικῶτων, καὶ φοινικὰ γράμματα ἐπ’ αὐτῆς πρὸς δῆλωσιν τοῦ τε στρατοῦ καὶ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ σφῶν τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ἔχόντων, κ', τ. λ.* : besides which, these vexilla often bore the figure, bust, or *προτομή* of the emperors. And that the standards, as well as the eagles, were wont to be treated by the soldiers with idolatrous honours, we learn from what Josephus records, B. Jud. vi. vi. 1. (in reference either to the former exclusively, or to both together,) on the tenth of Lous, U. C. 323, the very day of the destruction of the temple, and while the sanctuary, and all about it, were still blazing with their last fire ; *viz.*, that the soldiers, *καυόμενοι . . . αὐτοῦ τε τοῦ ναοῦ, καὶ τῶν πέριξ ἀπάντων, κομίσαντες τὰς σημαίας εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν, καὶ θέμενοι τῆς ἀνατολικῆς πύλης ἀντικρὺς, ἔθυσάν τε αὐταῖς αὐτόθι, καὶ τὸν Τίτον μετὰ μεγίστων εὐφημιῶν ἀπέφηναν αὐτοκράτορα.*

16—18; Mark xiii. 14—16; Luke xxi. 21, 22: to which we may add, Matt. xxiv. 20, and Mark xiii.

It might justly be inferred, then, that the prediction of the abomination of desolation's being seen standing on holy ground, would not be fulfilled, except by the fact of the military ensigns of Rome being seen planted in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, or of the temple; but would be fulfilled whenever that fact should become visible. It is worthy of remark too, that such an abomination as this in particular might properly be seen *ἑστῶς*, or standing; for it is essential to the military ensign of any description, to be fixed upright in the ground. The marginal version too of Daniel ix. 27. instead of the version in the text, "And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate," has it, more exactly after the original, "And upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator;" as if in direct allusion to the planting of the ensigns of a victorious army upon the walls and battlements of a besieged city, which has yielded to their arms.

But the same fact is further specified by Jerusalem's being to be seen encompassed, or beginning to be encompassed, with armies, (*στρατόπεδα*, literally the ground occupied by armies, the encampments of armies as such,) and that is manifestly only another way of describing the fact of Jerusalem's being seen besieged, or beginning to be besieged, by armies regularly encamped, or beginning to be encamped, against it or around it; and those too the armies of Rome.

All the occasions, between the time of the delivery of the prophecy, and the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, upon which it would appear, from the intermediate history supplied by Josephus, that Jerusalem was ever in a situation to answer to this description, I believe are these which follow:

First, Jerusalem might be said to be encompassed with armies, when, as Josephus tells us, B. Jud. vi. v. 3. among other phenomena, which preceded the war, on the 21st of Artemisius, (May 4,) U. C. 819, A. D. 66, chariots and armies in battle array were seen in the air, surrounding the cities: *πρὸ γὰρ ἡλίου δύσεως ὤφθη μετέωρα περὶ πᾶσαν τὴν χώραν, ἄρματα καὶ φάλαγγες ἔροπλοι διάπτουσαι τῶν νεφῶν, καὶ κυκλοῦμεναι τὰς πόλεις:*

18: secondly, the purpose, intention, or final end of the days which were to follow, Luke xxi. 22:

a fact which we had occasion to refer to before, under the head of *φύβητρα* and *σημεία ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ*.

Secondly, the literal abomination, or military idol of Rome might be seen standing on holy ground, and Jerusalem beginning to be invested by a besieging army, when Cestius Gallus, the president of Syria, U. C. 819, A. D. 66, having marched with his forces to suppress the rebellion of the Jews, if possible, at the outset, was encamped on the 26th of Hyperberetæus, or Tisri, October 4, at Scopus, a place within view of the city; (*ἔνθεν ἦ τε πόλις ἤδη κατεφαίνετο, καὶ τὸ τοῦ ναοῦ μέγεθος ἔκλαμπρον, καθὰ τῷ βορείῳ κλίματι τῆς πόλεως χθαμαλὸς συνάπτων ὁ χῶρος ἐτύμως σκοπὸς ὠνόμασται*: Jos. B. v. ii. 3: though Ant. Jud. xi. viii. 5. we are told its name in the Hebrew was Sapha. As to its distance, it was in fact only seven stades (not much more than three quarters of an English mile) remote from the city. Again, when on the 29th of Tisri, October 7, he took possession of the Bezetha, Cænopolis, or New City, (the whole of the city on the north-side,) and encamped over against the *βασιλικὴ αὐλή*: and still more when on the 5th of Dios or Marchesvan, October 12, he assaulted the northern flank of the temple, and if he had pleased, might have forced his way into it, and ended the war on that day: Bell. Jud. ii. xix. 4, 5.

Thirdly, Jerusalem might be said to be beginning to be beleaguered on all sides, or compassed with armies, and those the armies of Rome, when Vespasian, after the campaign of U. C. 820, A. D. 67, which had been employed in the reduction of the two Galilees, took the field again, in the spring of the next year, U. C. 821, A. D. 68, with the intention of reducing Judæa and Jerusalem; the Roman forces being so disposed as to occupy the approaches on all sides, both eastward and westward, northward and southward: *καὶ διειληφότος τοῦ πολέμου τὴν τε ὄρεινὴν ὄλην, καὶ τὴν πεδιάδα πᾶσαν, οἱ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις τὰς ἐξόδους ἀφήρηντο. τοὺς μὲν γὰρ αὐτομολεῖν προαιρουμένους οἱ ζηλωταὶ παρεφύλασσοντο, τοὺς δὲ, οὕτω τὰ Ῥωμαίων φρονούντας, εἶργεν ἡ στρατιὰ, πανταχόθεν τὴν πόλιν περιέχουσα*: Bell. iv. ix. 1. At this time, just when the Roman general was preparing to move with his army so disposed upon Jerusalem, (sect. 2,) the news of the

thirdly, a promise that they should be prematurely abridged, and the grounds of it, Matt. xxiv. 22;

death of Nero and of the revolt of Vindex (in Gaul) arrested his progress, and put a stop for the present to the active prosecution of the war: iv. x. 2.

Lastly, Jerusalem was again placed in a situation to answer to the description in the prophecy, when hostilities were resumed by Titus Cæsar, U. C. 323, A. D. 70, in the month Xanthicus, or Nisan: B. v. ii. 3. The course which he took on approaching the city, before which he appeared first about the time of the passover, Nisan 14, April 13, was the same as Cestius's: himself, with two divisions of his army, advancing upon it from Gabao (the ancient Gibeah of Saul) to Scopus; the third division from Jericho, by way of mount Olivet; and all three being posted accordingly—the two divisions on the north, seven stades from the city, and the third on the east, about five or six. Soon after, v. iii. 2—5, the two divisions in question advanced from Scopus to within two stades of the city, that of Titus in person, opposite to the Psephine tower, the other opposite to the *Turris Hippica*, (both on the north side of Jerusalem :) the third division remaining where it was posted before, on or at the foot of mount Olivet. Thus was Jerusalem invested with *στρατόπεδα*, each upon an encampment of its own: and it was still more effectually so surrounded, when not long after the siege had been begun, the Roman besieging army in three days' time carried a wall of thirty-nine stades in circuit all round about it.

Of these several occasions, some one or other of which we may presume to be meant in the prophecy, the first must be excluded from the scope of the prediction, because it was not a real, but an apparent or imaginary investment of Jerusalem with armies; and because it was no more an investment of Jerusalem even in that manner, than of any other of the cities of the country; and because it was one of a class of events which were to belong to a different time, and to serve a different purpose, from this particular fact of seeing Jerusalem invested with armies: because too, though Jerusalem might be seen, in consequence of that phenomenon, in some sense encircled with

Mark xiii. 20 : fourthly, the description of the days themselves, and of the effects, both at the time and for

armies, the abomination of desolation also could in no sense, in consequence of the same phenomenon, be said to have been seen standing on holy ground. Yet admitting the fact of the phenomenon in question, which Tacitus, as we have seen, mentions, as well as Josephus, the occurrence of such a phenomenon at such a time, might serve a specific purpose, in rousing the attention of the Hebrew Christians to the observation of the real sign of the same description, which was shortly about to be given.

The third and the fourth occasions of the same kind, the former Vespasian's encircling Jerusalem with armies, U. C. 821. the latter Titus's, U. C. 823. would either of them answer very exactly to the simple description of the matter of fact, in each of its parts ; both Jerusalem's being invested in an hostile manner with armies, and those the armies of Rome, whose ensigns were truly abominations, and under the circumstances of the case, abominations of desolation—and those abominations being seen, planted on holy ground. But the war had been two years going on, at the time of the first of these occurrences, and four years, at the time of the second ; in which case, it is scarcely to be conceived that either of them was what the prophecy could more particularly have had in view, by making it known beforehand. The object of the prediction that Jerusalem should be seen surrounded with armies, was not simply to foretell the fact, but to put the Hebrew Christians in possession of a sign, by which they were to know when the time of its destruction was infallibly approaching, and it was necessary to consult for their own safety by a timely flight. No instance of the kind, then, can be supposed first and properly intended by the prophecy, the fact of which was not competent to serve for a warning to those who had been prepared to expect a sign of that description, as well as for the fulfilment of the thing predicted by the matter of fact. The safety of the Hebrew Christians must have been provided for long before U. C. 821. and still more, before U. C. 823. or, humanly speaking, it would have been too late to provide for it at all.

The only matter of fact, then, still to come, which we can

the future, which should result from them, Matt. xxiv. 19—22 ; Mark xiii. 17. 19, 20 ; Luke xxi. 23,

reasonably suppose the prediction to have contemplated, beforehand, with this particular purpose in view, must be such as in point of the time of its occurrence, was as well adapted to serve for a warning to the disciples, that the destruction of Jerusalem was approaching, as in the matter of fact, to answer to the description of Jerusalem's being seen encompassed with armies, and the abomination, destined to make desolate, standing on holy ground. The second of the occasions, above enumerated, the siege of Jerusalem by Cestius, U. C. 819. A. D. 66, was equally adapted to answer both these purposes ; and therefore was in all probability the occasion which the prophecy had in view, in order to its own fulfilment.

For, first, this was the first actual occasion of any such occurrence, as Jerusalem's being seen invested in an hostile manner by a Roman army, between the time of the prophecy, and the time of the destruction of the city ; and the language of the prediction is so expressed, that the first actual event of the kind, which would answer to the letter of the description beforehand, and at the same time serve the purpose of a sign, to which it was destined to be subservient, must be supposed to have been first intended by it. In the next place, the inference directed to be raised upon the occurrence of this fact, whensoever it happened, that the desolation of Jerusalem was *drawn nigh*, would be more applicable to the first siege by Cestius, than to the second by Titus: the desolation in question might really be said to be drawn nigh, but not yet come, at the time of the former, but it must surely be said not to be simply drawn nigh, but actually arrived, at the time of the latter ; especially when we consider what ravages the war had made, both in the rest of the country, and in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, before the time of that event.

Thirdly, there was something truly remarkable about this siege of Cestius, which does not admit of explanation except on the supposition that an overruling Providence purposely ordered all its circumstances to this one end and result, of serving as a warning to the believing portion of the Hebrew community, that

24 : each of these things will require to be considered in its order.

the war with Rome was begun, and the threatened destruction of Jerusalem was at hand ; but for nothing more. It is well known, indeed, that the rebellion of the Jews had formally commenced, before he undertook his expedition against Jerusalem ; the former in the spring of U. C. 819. the month Jar or Artemisius, the latter in the autumn of the same year, the month Hyperberetæus or Tisri : but it is also known that the Jews were in no state to prosecute the war, at that time ; that they had been goaded into it by their procurator Gessius Florus, rather than had embraced it of their own accord ; that they had as yet raised no troops, nor laid up any magazines of provisions, nor had time to fortify their city ; that the principal men in Jerusalem were adverse to the war ; and none but a faction, at that time comparatively weak in numbers and influence, the faction of the zealots, was the party that supported it ; that the rebellion as yet had not spread much beyond the precincts of Jerusalem, at least not of Judæa—and that all the country was prepared to follow the fate of the capital, and if that fell into the power of the Romans, to return quietly to its allegiance.

For a detailed account of the proceedings of Cestius, I refer the reader to my former work, vol. i. Diss. x. 366—371. During the time of his stay before the city, which was strictly speaking between the twenty-sixth of Hyperberetæus and the fifth of Dius, there were two occasions, on which Josephus tells us he was quite able to have taken the city ; the first the twenty-ninth of Hyperberetæus, when he captured the Bezetha, or Cænopolis, the second the fifth of Dius, when he assaulted the temple. On the first of these days, Ananus the son of Jonathan, and others, were ready to have admitted him into the city, and made offers to him, to that effect ; but, as Josephus informs us, *ὁ δὲ καὶ πρὸς ὀργὴν ὑπεριδὼν, καὶ μὴ πάνυ πιστεύσας, διεμέλλησεν*, that is, he let slip the opportunity, until it was too late ; the war-faction having discovered the design of the other party, and prevented it, by throwing its authors over the walls : Bell. ii. xix. 5. On the second, though the seditious, intimidated by the vigour of his attack, and despairing of success, were already preparing to

With respect to the preceptive part of the same division—I have so fully treated of the practical ad-

evacuate the temple, and to consult for their own safety by flight; instead of pushing his advantage—and with no ostensible reason to account for his conduct—he suddenly drew off his forces, and retreated the same night to his former post at Scopus; and the next day to Gabao: from whence on the eighth of Dios, he commenced a retrograde movement, retracing his steps into Syria. In the course of the retreat of this day, from Gabao to Bethoron, he encountered a vigorous attack from the Jews, whose courage rose in proportion to the apparent timidity of the Roman general; and sustained a loss almost amounting to a total discomfiture—the only success which the Jews gained over the Romans throughout the contest, yet so fatal to them in its immediate consequences, by the false confidence in their own strength, and the contempt of the Romans, which it inspired, that Josephus does not hesitate to attribute to it all the subsequent calamities of the nation: *γίνεται τὸ Κεστίου πταίσμα συμφορὰ τοῦ παντὸς ἡμῶν ἔθνους. ἐπήρθησαν γὰρ ἐπὶ τούτῳ μᾶλλον οἱ τὸν πόλεμον ἀγαπήσαντες, καὶ νικήσαντες τοὺς Ῥωμαίους εἰς τέλος ἠλπίσσαμεν: Vita, 6.*

Fourthly, it is mentioned by Josephus, B. ii. xx. 1, that after the defeat of Cestius, πολλοὶ τῶν ἐπιφωῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὥσπερ βαπτίζομένης νέως ἀνεύχοντο τῆς πόλεως, that is, took instant advantage of the opportunity afforded by that event, to make their escape from the city. Most commentators on the prophecy upon the mount have been induced to consider this fact as the historical confirmation of what was naturally to be expected from the literal observance of our Saviour's injunction to his disciples, to make their escape from Jerusalem, as soon as the sign destined to intimate the near approach of its ruin and desolation, which he had forewarned them to expect in due season, had once been given them. Nor, indeed, would it be easy upon any other principle, to account for the secession of so many of its inhabitants, at this particular juncture; for the immediate effect of the defeat of Cestius, was the evacuation of Judæa by the Romans, the junction of the Galilees, and the predominance of the war-party in all quarters. This defeat happened early in the autumnal quarter of U. C. 819, and no

monitions combined with the predictions on this, as well as the former occasion, Luke xvii. that nothing

Roman force, of any consequence, was visible in any part of the country, before the spring quarter of U. C. 820, when Vespasian, having been expressly dispatched by Nero, arrived and took the command. In the mean time, how diligently this interval was spent by the Jews of Jerusalem in preparing for the contest, and taking the necessary measures of precaution in all parts, to which their influence extended—the Life of Josephus will shew; a great part of which is taken up with the account of his own mission by the sanhedrim into Galilee, to take the defence of that region—and his own proceedings before the invasion of the Romans—as well as of the course and result of the hostilities afterwards carried on there, between himself and them; especially at the siege of Jotapata.

Fifthly, it is to be remembered that after the commencement of the war, the Christian Jews would be in as much danger from their own countrymen, the zealots, so long as they continued among them, as from the Romans. It may well be presumed, that in the directions which our Saviour gave them beforehand, to consult for their safety by the most instantaneous flight from the scene of danger, as soon as the expected notification of the proper moment had been given; he had an eye to the risk they ran from this quarter, as much as to any thing else. This body, which constituted the war-faction generally, came in the course of time to consist of three parties; that of Eleazar, the party of the zealots properly so called, who had possession of the city and the temple from the first, U. C. 819; that of John of Gischala, who made their escape thither from Galilee, U. C. 820, retreating before the successful progress of the Roman arms in that quarter; and that of Simon Gioræ, which gained admission in the month Xanthicus, U. C. 822. A. D. 69: Bell. iv. ix. 12. In the first hurry of success, after the retreat of Cestius, the zealots in question did not think of preventing the escape from the city of any that would; but in a very short time after, they took effectual precautions for that purpose, guarding the gates, and occupying the roads and passes into the country, in every direction—treating all of their countrymen, whom they surprised in the attempt to escape, as traitors to the

is necessary at present, except to notice one of the number, both because it is a *new* one, and because

common cause, and putting them to death without mercy. This danger to the safety of the Christians of Jerusalem, if any of them were there at the time when Cestius appeared before it, was not to be avoided except by the most instant departure, as soon as by his retreat he had left the road to escape open.

Lastly, it is a remarkable circumstance that from the twenty-sixth of Hyperberetæus, when Cestius first approached the city, unto the fifth of Dios, when he began his retreat from before it, the interval was just nine days; and if a day be put for a year, nine years, as I have shewed in my former work, vol. i. Diss. xiii. 577—598 (Cf. the supplementary volume, Diss. ix. 163—176, and x. 177—191, and 431—438,) was the duration of the war from first to last, U. C. 819—828. A. D. 66—75. On all these accounts, the present occurrence was eminently calculated to serve as a warning to the believing Jews, such as had been promised, and as a sign of the visitation impending on the unbelieving; but not as any commencement of the days of vengeance themselves: whereas the occurrence of the siege under Titus was just the reverse—incapable of answering any longer purpose as a sign promised to the former, but being the catastrophe and consummation of all that had been predicted in the way of punishment upon the latter.

On this subject, then, no more perhaps requires to be said. Before we take our leave of it, however, we may observe that, though there is little reason to question whether the explanation given above of the nature of the abomination of desolation, in its first and proper sense, is correct; many of the ancient interpreters of this prophecy put other constructions upon it, which it may be proper to mention. Thus, Eusebius in Lucam, apud SS. Dep. i. 158. C: understands it of the statue of Hadrian on horseback, in brass, set up upon the site of the temple, in after-time; *καὶ τὸ βδελύγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως . . . ἔστη ἐν μέσῳ τῷ ἀγιάσματι, τὸ χάλκεον φημὶ ἀπικόνισμα τοῦ πολιορκητοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μέσῳ τῷ ἱερῷ ἰδρυμένον.* The erection of this statue on that site, is repeatedly asserted by Chrysostom: vide Opera, i. 434, B. 435, A. Hom. xxxvi. adv. Jud. lib. iii. And so Jerome, Opera iii. 25. *ad*

it has an equal reference to the conduct of the disciples before and after the time of the event itself :

calc.: in Isai. ii: Ubi quondam erat templum et religio Dei ibi Hadriani statua, et Jovis idolum collocatum est. Again, iv. pars i. 115. *ad med.*: in Matt. xxiv: Potest autem simpliciter aut de Antichristo accipi, aut de imagine Cæsaris, quam Pilatus posuit in templo: aut de Hadriani equestri statua, quæ in ipso sancto sanctorum loco usque in præsentem diem stetit. Ibid. pars ii. 564. *circa calc.* Epp. xlix: Ab Hadriani temporibus usque ad imperium Constantini, per annos circiter centum octoginta, in loco resurrectionis simulacrum Jovis; in crucis rupe, statua ex marmore Veneris a gentibus posita colebatur . . . Bethleem nunc nostra lucus inumbrabat Thamus, id est, Adonidis; et in specu, ubi quondam Christus parvulus vagiit, Veneris amasius plangebatur.

One motive to the rebellion of the Jews in the time of Hadrian, is said to have been his erecting a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, on the site of the temple, when he founded the new city of Ælia Capitolina on the site of Jerusalem: Dio Cass. apud Xiph. lxi. Zonaras xi. 23. 589. C: Ephraemi Chron. apud SS. Dep. iii. 3. Cassiodorus tells us that at the same time, the figure of a swine was sculptured in marble over the gate of the city leading to Bethleem: Chronicon, p. 8: Coss. Severo et Sylvano: His Coss. Ælia civitas, id est, Hierusalem, ab Ælio Hadriano condita est, et in fronte ejus portæ qua Bethleem egredimur, sus sculptus in marmore, significans Romanæ potestati subjacere Judæos. So Theodoret, i. 1126. Interpret. in Ps. lxxiii. 5: καὶ χοίρου δὲ προτομὴν οἱ Ῥωμαίων βασιλεῖς τοῖς τῆς πύλης ἐνεκόλασαν λίθοις.

It is a tradition of the church from a remote antiquity, that not one believing Jew perished in the siege of Jerusalem: an effect which, if the prophecy on the mount was expressly vouchsafed with a view to ensure their safety amidst the general calamities of the rest of their countrymen, was not more than might have been expected. But on this principle the effect, it might be supposed, was due to the prophecy itself, remembered and applied at the proper time. We find it mentioned however, in ecclesiastical history, that the cause which produced the secession

“And pray ye that your flight may not take place in winter, nor on a sabbath-day,” as St. Matthew ex-

of the church of Jerusalem, before the war, and thereby effected their safety from the common destruction, was a command conveyed to them, at the time, according to Eusebius, by revelation, according to Eriphanus, by an angel, or from Christ. Thus Eusebius, E. H. iii. 5. 75. A : οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ τῆς ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐκκλησίας, κατὰ τινα χρησμόν τοῖς αὐτόθι δοκίμοις δι' ἀποκαλύψεως δοθέντα πρὸ τοῦ πολέμου, μεταναστῆναι τῆς πόλεως, καὶ τινα τῆς Περαιᾶς πόλιν οἰκεῖν κεκελευσμένον· Πέλλαν αὐτὴν ὀνομάζουσιν· ἐν ἧ τῶν εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότων ἀπὸ τῆς Ἱερουσαλὴμ μετωκισμένων, κ', τ. λ. For their return, and the appointment of Symeon to be bishop of the church, in the room of James, see Ibid. iii. 11. 86. D. Eriphanus, i. 123. B. Nazaræi vii. speaking of the region of Basanitis, as one among others, in which the principles of this sect flourished most, observes, ἐκέειθεν γὰρ ἡ ἀρχὴ γέγονε, μετὰ τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων μετάστασιν, πάντων τῶν μαθητῶν (τῶν) ἐν Πέλλῃ ὄκηκόντων, Χριστοῦ φήσαντος καταλείψαι τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα, καὶ ἀναχωρῆσαι, ἐπειδὴ ἤμελλε πάσχειν πολιορκίαν· καὶ ἐκ τῆς τοιαύτης ὑποθέσεως τὴν Περαιᾶν οἰκήσαντες, ἐκέισε, ὡς ἔφην, διέτριβον. To the same effect, speaking of the Ebionites, i. 126. B. C. Ebionæi 2. he says ; γέγονε δὲ ἡ ἀρχὴ τούτου μετὰ τὴν τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ἄλωσιν. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ πάντες οἱ εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστευκότες τὴν Περαιᾶν κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ κατέφησαν τὸ πλεόν, ἐν Πέλλῃ τινὶ πόλει κυλουμένη τῆς Δεκαπόλεως τῆς ἐν τῷ Εὐαγγελίῳ γεγραμμένης, πλησίον τῆς Βατανείας καὶ Βασανίτιδος χώρας, τὸ τηρικαῦτα ἐκεῖ μεταναστάντων, καὶ ἐκέισε διατριβόντων αὐτῶν, γέγονεν ἐκ τούτου πρόφασις τῷ Ἐβίῳ. Again, ii. 171. A. B. De Mensuris et Ponderibus, xv. he says : ἡνίκα γὰρ ἔμελλεν ἡ πόλις ἀλίσκεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν Ῥωμαίων, προεχρηματίσθησαν ὑπὸ ἀγγέλου πάντες οἱ μαθηταὶ μεταστῆναι ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως, μελλούσης ἄρδην ἀπόλλυσθαι. οὔτινες καὶ μετανάσται γενόμενοι ὄκησαν ἐν Πέλλῃ τῇ προγεγραμμένη πόλει, πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, ἥτις ἐκ Δεκαπόλεως λέγεται εἶναι. μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἐρήμωσιν Ἱερουσιλημ ἐπαναστρέψαντες, ὡς ἔφην, σημεῖα μεγάλα ἐπέτελουν.

These two traditions do not seem to be taken from each other, and yet they agree in the assertion of the same fact. I see no reason to doubt the truth of this fact. Many motives might be assigned to the communication of the revelation, or the command in question, notwithstanding the prophecy already

presses this injunction : or, “ And pray ye that your flight may not take place in winter,” as it is expressed by St. Mark. This particular direction, we perceive, is omitted altogether by St. Luke, and is expressed by St. Mark in common with St. Matthew, only down to the mention of winter ; whence we may justly infer, that though St. Matthew alone may have given us the exact words of our Saviour, yet the substantial import, the ultimate drift of the admonition itself, is sufficiently represented in the

on record ; one of the chief of which might be, to supply the omission perceptible in that prophecy, viz., as to the quarter to which the Hebrew Christians were to repair before, and where they were to continue during, the war.

Pella is described by Josephus, B. Jud. iii. iii. 3, as the most northern boundary of Peræa, answering to Machærus on the south. The maps place it on the verge of Peræa and Gaulanitis, over against Scythopolis in Galilee. Peræa was part of the dominions of the younger Agrippa, the friend and ally of the Romans, all through the war. It is certain that the war never penetrated into that quarter ; and consequently, that if the Hebrew church migrated to Pella before it, they would be safe from its effects all the time it lasted.

The peculiar constitution of the Hebrew church, (a constitution characteristic, as we may justly presume, of the church, not only in Jerusalem, but in every other quarter of Judæa, where Christian societies existed,) according to which its members had all things common, and the property of the community as such consisted simply in a pecuniary fund—would doubtless contribute as much as any thing to facilitate their escape, at the proper time, both from Jerusalem and from all other parts of the country, which were menaced or likely to be menaced by the approach of a common danger. The nature of this constitution, the proofs of its existence, and the final end to which we may suppose it to have been directed, were considered by me in their proper place elsewhere, vol. iii. 160—279, to which I beg to refer the reader.

terms of the direction, as recorded by St. Mark. Now by this, the disciples are required to pray to God, before the time of the event, that through his providence, in so ordering the course of things, the recognition of the momentous warning, imposing the necessity of an immediate flight from the scene of danger, might not take place in the winter; obviously, lest, in addition to the evils of war, and the other dangers which they would have to encounter, they should be exposed to the inclemencies of the season also. It would be an evident deduction from such a premise as this, that flight, instant flight, under all circumstances, must be the final end to which the preceding intimations were directed—since any delay however interposed, any obstruction, however occasioned, to the speed, or facility of escape, was likely to be of serious consequence; sufficient to make it a special object of prayer to be preserved from it. Still more will this conviction of the character of the emergency be increased, if we couple with the command to pray to be spared the necessity of escaping in the winter, the direction also to pray to be spared the necessity of escaping on a day of rest; for that would imply that possibly they might either be compelled to break the sabbath, if they were to provide for their safety betimes, or if, from respect to the sacredness of the day, they forbore to do this, until the sabbath was past, that the consequences of the loss even of one day might perhaps be fatal ^z.

^z Whatsoever we may understand by the final end of the injunction to pray that their flight might not happen in the winter—whether the difficulty of travelling, and reaching a place of safety, at that season of the year, the difficulty of procuring sub-

With respect to the second particular, the purpose, intention, or final end of the days which were to sistence, or simply the rigours and inclemencies of the weather, considered in themselves—the injunction itself implies a possibility that by virtue of the prevailing intercession of prayer, the overruling Providence of God might be so far exerted in behalf of the disciples, as besides the danger necessarily to be encountered from their own countrymen, or from the Roman arms, not to suffer any obstacle to be thrown into the way of their escape, which his own disposal of times and seasons, with their respective events, might, if it seemed good to his wisdom, obviate and prevent. It appears, indeed, that the flight of the Hebrew Christians, if it ensued immediately on the defeat of Cestius, did not take place in the winter; and therefore that so far their prayer was heard, and the Divine providence to which all such contingencies are subject, did interpose on their behalf to save them from this additional risk. The eighth of Dios on which that defeat happened, corresponded in U. C. 819. A. D. 66. to October 15, and October in the Jewish year was one of the mildest months in their calendar. The truth is that the severity of winter in Judæa begins properly about December 12, and lasts until about January 20: vide my Supplementary Dissertations, p. 390, 391: and Cf. Dissertation v. 45, 46.

Nor is this all; for if I mistake not, it admits of proof that upon the same supposition, the latter part of the prayer enjoined, according to St. Matthew, *μηδὲ ἐν σαββάτῳ*, was granted likewise. An express injunction to pray against this contingency in particular, implies of necessity that up to the time of the end, the Hebrew Christians should retain their old religious scruples against travelling on the sabbath-day; and, as we argued above, did the opportunity first allowed them for escaping fall out on that day in particular, their reluctance to violate these scruples might possibly interfere with their departure at the proper time, and so endanger the chance of their escape. Be this, however, as it may; the Christians in Jerusalem, at the time of the attack upon it by Cestius, were spared the necessity either of breaking the sabbath, if they took advantage of the first opportunity afforded by his departure, to make their escape, or of endangering their own safety, even for a single day, by delaying to be gone. The 29th of Tisri, on which he first assaulted the city, as I shewed

follow—it is sufficiently intimated in the name by which they are characterised—*ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως*, the

in my former work, (vol. i. Diss. *loc. cit.*) was a Thursday, and the 5th of Dius, on the evening of which, after renewing the assault, he so unexpectedly retreated to his former encampment at Scopus, was a Tuesday; the 8th on which he sustained his defeat was a Friday. But the city was left free on the 5th: and those who would, might take advantage of the opening thus made to escape. It is worth while to observe too, in this case, as Cestius retreated on the evening of the 5th, how the first opportunity allowed for escaping literally coincided with the *night*; as the language of our Lord, Luke xvii. 34. seems to intimate that it should.

If the words, *μηδὲ ἐν σαββάτῳ*, would admit of being understood in another sense, as I think they would—that of denoting not merely the sabbath-day, but the whole of any period of time which might be called a sabbatic period—we should have reason to admire the coincidence between this part of the prophecy on the mount, and the event, in another respect. On this principle, the words in question would denote the period appointed for the celebration of any one of the great national festivals; for instance the feast of Tabernacles; a period extending from the fifteenth of Tisri to the twenty-third. It would be as much against the religious scruples of a conscientious Jew to be obliged to travel during the continuance of a solemnity of this kind, as on the sabbath-day itself; and it may be supposed that the same regard to the scruples of the Hebrew Christians, which dictated the injunction to pray that their flight might not take place on a day of rest, meant it also to apply to being spared, if possible, the necessity of escaping during a week of rest. Now Cestius Gallus approached Jerusalem, as I shewed in my former work, at the earliest on the twenty-fourth of Tisri; that is, two days after the close of the feast of Tabernacles; and he quitted its neighbourhood again on the fifth of Dius ensuing; when that feast had been twelve days over.

Nor is this all. It is mentioned by Josephus, that when he was arrived at Lydda, on his march to Jerusalem, he found the male population, with the exception of some fifty persons (whose absence might be easily accounted for, from a variety of

days of vengeance—or rather of righting, avenging, and redressing. The parable of the unjust judge,

causes) gone up to the celebration of this feast, and consequently assembled in Jerusalem: De Bell. ii. xix. 1. What was true at this time, of the inhabitants of Lydda, was doubtless equally so of the population of every other place in the country. Consequently, when Cestius came before Jerusalem, all the male population of Judæa in general were collected in the capital, celebrating the feast of Tabernacles. It is morally certain, that among this number would be the Christian part of the Jewish community; not only the members of the church actually resident in Jerusalem, but those of the churches in every other part of the country. There can be no doubt that the Hebrew converts to Christianity continued to observe all the forms and ceremonies of their ancient law, notwithstanding their conversion, so long as there was a possibility of doing so; that is, up to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem itself—and with as much strictness as ever*: of which forms and ceremonies, attendance at the various legal festivals, especially at that which by common consent passed for the greatest of all, the feast of Tabernacles, (see my Diss. vol. ii. Diss. i. 9. and Supplem. Diss. 438, 439.) would be as imperative as any.

I would demand, then, if, when all the nation was assembled at Jerusalem, celebrating the feast of Tabernacles, the Christians of Judæa also would not be among the number? and if so, whether it would not be a singular coincidence, that at the critical period, when the significant warning so long before promised them in particular, was about to be given, consisting as it did in the hostile investment of Jerusalem by a Roman army, and the planting of the ensigns of desolation visibly on holy ground, *they* should be ready collected on the spot, for whose benefit the warning was intended, to witness and to profit by it? Could that be undesigned which would have so happy an effect? would it be less demonstrative of a special Providence, controlling and directing the course of things from first to last, that Jerusalem should be first apparently in danger from the arms of Rome, at one of the great festivals, when all the nation was assembled

* In proof of this, let the reader consult Acts x. 14. 28; xi. 2, 3; xv. 1. 5. 21; xiii. 20; xx. 16; xxi. 20, 21, 23, 24, 25. Galat. ii. 11—21.

and the comment of our Lord subjoined to it, gave us to understand that among the exciting causes to this effusion of the Divine wrath, upon its proper subjects, one of the most powerful should be the cries and tears of his own elect, calling unto him night and day: and therefore that one, and the chief of its objects must be to redress the wrongs of the suffering Hebrew church, at the hands of their persecutors and oppressors. The last address to the Scribes and Pharisees, with the delivery of which not long before he pronounced this prophecy, Jesus had made an end of his public ministry—had

within its walls, than that it should be finally exposed to the same risk, under the same circumstances, at another? that Cestius should have been brought before it at the feast of Tabernacles, than that Titus should have surprised it at the feast of the Passover? that the believing Jews should have been apparently as much in danger, on the first of these occasions, as the unbelieving Jews on the second? yet that the former should have been as completely preserved from the risk to which they were exposed on that occasion, as the latter were abandoned to all the consequences of the surprise upon the other? If these two events, though so like to each other in their own character, were yet designed for very different purposes; if the siege of Jerusalem by Cestius was intended for a *warning*, and the siege by Titus for a *punishment*; if the good of the believing Jews was exclusively consulted by the former, and the evil of the unbelieving Jews by the latter; both dispensations become consistent, and the finger of God is equally perceptible in each. It was to be expected that the believing Jews should be found collected at Jerusalem on the first of these occasions, as much as the unbelieving on the second; that the believing Jews should be as much endangered for a time, on the former occasion, as the unbelieving, on the latter; yet that the believing Jews should be unexpectedly delivered from their danger, on that occasion, while the unbelieving Jews should be left to all the consequences of theirs, on the other.

foretold that all the righteous blood, from the beginning of the world, all the punishment of the sin of persecution, contracted by the enemies of the militant church, from the first moment of its being, should be exacted at the hands of that generation; as more than filling up the measure of the iniquity of all before them, and not only repeating the offence in kind, but carrying to still greater lengths the same spirit of violence, the same hatred of the truth, the same blindness and hardness of heart, which had actuated their predecessors in this career.

Moreover, in specifying this as a further end of the avenging or redressing to which those days should be devoted, "that all the things that were written might be fulfilled," the reference is doubtless to the penal denunciations of scripture, which could not be otherwise fulfilled, than by the event and effect of those days themselves; and yet being part of the Divine word, as much as the rest, were bound to be fulfilled in their season, as much as any of the rest. The Divine veracity itself could not be attested and vindicated, but by the consummation of the judgments in question. The fulfilment, indeed, of the penal denunciations of scripture is necessarily suspended upon a condition; the condition that they are provoked; that there is no other means of satisfying the Divine justice; that long continued sin and impenitence beforehand, notwithstanding the forbearance and longsuffering of God, leave no other alternative, but to fulfil his own denunciations against both, at last. And when it is thus indispensably necessary to the proof of the Divine justice, that the punishment denounced against sin beforehand, should

begin to be executed at last ; it is no less necessary to the proof of the Divine veracity, that the whole of the sentence denounced beforehand, should be executed at last ; that every thing should be fulfilled which is written ^a.

Yet a promise is subjoined to this declaration of the final end of the days in question, that they should be abridged, or cut short ; with respect to the fact of which abridgment generally, or the fulfilment of the prediction itself, understood too of both the extremities of the days in question, both the premature commencement, and the abrupt termination of the period so appropriated to the purpose of vengeance, there is but one opinion to be entertained ; viz. that it is borne out by the testimony of contemporary history ^b.

^a In this reference, then, to the necessity of the fulfilment of every penal denunciation of scripture, because it was written ; because it was part of the word of truth ; we must suppose included whatsoever answers to that description, and is recorded in the Old Testament, whether it makes part of the Law, or of the Prophets ; more especially, however, those two celebrated chapters of the Pentateuch, Leviticus xxvi. and Deuteronomy xxviii.

^b The context, indeed, of this particular prediction, respecting the abridgment of the days in question, may be considered to imply that it is first and properly to be understood of the curtailment, in some manner or other, of that period in the whole duration of the war, which should be characterised by the *θλίψις μεγάλη*, the *ἀνάγκη μεγάλη*, and the *ὀργή ἐν τῷ λαῷ*, spoken of just before, and just after : that is, of the period in the duration of the contest, occupied by the *siege* of Jerusalem ; and devoted to a penal or retributive dispensation on the unbelieving Jews, attended by such and such calamitous effects, the consequence of that siege in particular.

Along with the promise of such a dispensation as the premature abbreviation of the period in question,

On this construction, it would be no objection to the supposed fact of the abridgment, (which would be in reality the abridgment of an intermediate part or period in the complex of a longer duration only,) that the Jewish war might last in all nine years, having begun U. C. 819, A. D. 66, and not being altogether concluded before U. C. 828, A. D. 75: for the proof of which points I refer the reader to my former work, vol. i. Diss. xiii. 577—598, and Supplemental Dissertations, Diss. ix. 163—176. x. 177—191. Miscellaneous Notes, 431—438. Cf. also vol. i. Diss. x. 354—365. The war might continue in some sense or other, from A. D. 66 to A. D. 75, but not in a state of open warfare, or active operation, all that time. The active period of the war, properly so called, is comprised between the spring of U. C. 820, A. D. 67, when Vespasian took the field for the first time, and the close of the campaign, U. C. 821, A. D. 68, the next year, when the further prosecution of hostilities on the part of the Romans, was suspended first by the season of the year, and then by the news of the civil wars at home. This period Tacitus expresses, *Histor. v. 10*, by “*intra duas aestates*,” (the summers of U. C. 820 and 821,) and while he bears testimony to the fact that “*proximus annus (U. C. 822.) civili bello intentus, quantum ad Judæos per otium transiit*,” he attests likewise that at this time nothing remained to be done for the entire subjugation of the country, previously in a state of revolt, except the siege and reduction of Jerusalem. In both these statements he is borne out by Josephus. The siege of Jerusalem itself was begun, by the appearance of Titus Cæsar before it, on or soon after the passover-day, April 13, U. C. 823, A. D. 70, and it was brought to an end by the capture of the city, on the eighth of Gorpiaeus, September 1, ensuing. The exact duration, then, of the days of vengeance, considered as devoted to the production of such penal effects in particular, as the calamities suffered by the unbelieving Jews, during the siege of Jerusalem, was comprehended between these two dates, the thirteenth of April at the earliest, and the first of September at the latest, in the same year; which is a period of one hundred and forty-two days in all.

the grounds of the dispensation are also stated ; first in the final end proposed by the effect itself—secondly,

It will follow from this explanation of the first and proper design of the abridgment of the days in question, that they, whose safety was specially interested in the fact of this abridgment, as the persons, who without some such premature termination of the period appropriated to their punishment, must otherwise all have been consumed—were the Jews of Jerusalem, or that portion of the nation that was collected on the spot, when the city was invested ; and was shut in by that event. Besides the ordinary inhabitants of the city, this would include the adult male population from the country, (if not the female also,) brought up previously by the anniversary of the passover. Josephus estimates this number at 1,197,000, which I should consider to be half the entire population of Judæa proper, the only part of the country which, at the time in question, was not altogether in the power of the Romans ; and whence it might be supposed that people would resort to the passover. Vide my Supplem. Diss. xiii. 224—240.

Of this number, 1,100,000, according to the Jewish historian, perished during the siege, partly by famine, partly by the sword ; the rest, 97,000, were made prisoners, either in the course of the siege, or at the final taking of the city. We perceive, then, of the existing population of Jerusalem, at the time of the commencement of this last siege—how large a proportion actually fell victims to the two instruments of destruction—penally employed against them while it lasted—famine and the sword—and how few, in comparison of those who perished in the siege—were those who survived to its end. What can prove more convincingly, the necessity of some interposition for the premature termination of this period of suffering, if the end thereof was not extermination, but punishment ? A little longer protraction of such days of vengeance, and in such a way ! and no flesh could have been saved ! Instead of 97,000 survivors of the last fire of Jerusalem, to contribute in their proportion, to keep up a remnant to Israel, even in the condition of exiles from their native country, and of dispersed among all lands, not one of her unhappy children could have outlived the destruction of their own city.

After

in the motive to that final end. First, "Had not those
"days been cut short," or, "Had not *the* Lord cut

After this plain proof of the necessity of an abridgment of the period in question, for the sake at least of such an effect as the saving of some flesh alive, among those who were not all destined to perish—coupled with the equally plain assertion of our Saviour, that the period should be abridged; it seems almost superfluous to inquire by what means the effect was brought to pass; or whether the process of the abridgment is perceptible to our own observations, in any thing before or during the siege of Jerusalem. It is sufficient to know, that however long the siege continued, a part, however small in comparison of the rest who perished, were saved from the common destruction; and that, had the siege but continued a little longer, even this remnant, small as it was, must have perished, as well as the rest. We may build upon these facts the inference, that even for such an effect as the preservation of this portion, the days of the common destruction must have been in some manner or other cut short; especially as we have the assurance of our Saviour, that they should be cut short—an assurance which must be considered tantamount to a declaration from the Author of the effect itself, what he should do to accomplish a purpose of his own providence.

Yet if every thing, which humanly speaking had a tendency to shorten the duration of the siege of Jerusalem at last, may be considered an instrumental or secondary means, by which the Divine Providence itself should work, in bringing about the fulfilment of its own purposes; various causes of that kind might be assigned, in events before or during the siege. For instance, as far back as the time of Herod Agrippa, U. C. 795 or 796, A. D. 42 or 43, the prevention of the designs of that king for strengthening the fortifications; the completion of which according to Josephus, would have rendered them *πάσης ἀνθρωπίνης κρείττονα βίαι*: Ant. Jud. xix. vii. 2. To this we may add, the interruption of a similar design for strengthening the eastern porch of the temple, U. C. 819. A. D. 66: Ant. Jud. xx. ix. 7. Cf. xv. xi. 3. Again—the neglect on the part of the Jews, to avail themselves of the opportunities for their own defence, which time itself afforded, before the final attack of the metropolis by

“ short the days, no flesh could have been saved :” secondly, “ But for the sake of the elect ones, those

the Romans ; so much so, that the city was not better prepared to sustain a siege, U. C. 823. A. D. 70, in the fourth year of the war, when Titus invested it, than it had been, U. C. 819. A. D. 66, in the first, when Cestius Gallus came before it. Again, the dissensions and contests of the war-faction ; in which there were three parties, agreeing only in a common endeavour to waste and destroy the general resources for the sake of injuring each other ; and in exercising the most horrible cruelties on the miserable *δῆμος*, or native population of Jerusalem. These parties were that of the zealots, under Eleazar, which had been in possession of the temple, since the point of time indicated by the *Bellum* of Josephus, ii. xvii. 2. Artemisius, or Dæsius, U. C. 819. A. D. 66 : that of John of Gischala, which fled to the city before the progress of the Roman arms in Galilee, Hyperberetæus, U. C. 820. A. D. 67 : B. iv. iii. 2—4. 12 : and that of Simon Gioræ, admitted in the month of Xanthicus, U. C. 822. A. D. 69 : B. iv. ix. 10—12. The arrival of John of Gischala was followed by the commencement of a fierce and bloody struggle for mastery, between himself and the party of the zealots, in the temple ; who, beginning to get the worst of it, called in the Idumæans to their assistance, in the month of November, U. C. 820. A. D. 67 : as related, B. iv. iv. 1, 2. 5—7. The excesses by which their entry into the city was followed, are related B. iv. v. 1—3. Cf. iv. vi. 2, 3, and vii. viii. 1. The Idumæans, in like manner, in the course of time, were instrumental to the admission of Simon ; whose excesses in Idumæa, before that time, are related B. iv. ix. 3—8. The joint excesses of all the three factions, in their contests with each other, and the injuries inflicted by their means in common on the people, are detailed, B. v. i. 1—3, from early in the spring of U. C. 823. A. D. 70, to sometime in Xanthicus, the same year, v. iii. 1, a little before the arrival of Titus ; when Eleazar’s faction was suppressed by John, and the number of contending parties in the temple and in the city, was reduced to two, his own and Simon’s.

Again, the burning of the magazines of corn, and the other stores of provision, which was the effect of the rage of the three

“ days will be cut short,” or as St. Mark continues,
“ But for the sake of the elect ones, whom he hath

parties against each other, B. v. i. 4, must have had a material influence in diminishing the subsequent duration of the siege; and it is not a little remarkable that this event happened early in the spring, U. C. 823, while there were yet three contending parties, just before the appearance of the Roman besieging army. The suddenness of the arrival of Titus too contributed doubtless to the same effect; for that was such as to take the contending parties entirely by surprise, and to compel them for the first time, to suspend their mutual hostilities, only for the sake of self-defence against the common enemy. It was not to be expected that a defence so begun, and carried on, without method, or plan of any kind, and almost without concert, though maintained with all the obstinacy of desperation on the part of the Jews—could make head long against the consummate discipline, generalship, and courage of their Roman assailants. Nor ought we to omit to mention the infatuation, (not to be accounted for, except on the supposition of an overruling Providence, which so ordered the course of events,) whereby the Jews voluntarily abandoned parts of their fortifications, of which they could never have been dispossessed by force; (B. vi. viii. 4:) and the admission of Titus, both on other occasions, and especially after the city was taken, when contemplating the magnitude and strength of the defences so abandoned, that God had fought for the Romans, and had himself driven their enemies from strongholds, against which no weapons, or power of man, would have availed any thing: vi. ix. 1.

Yet the predicted abridgment of the days in question, may be understood, in one sense, of the whole of the period of suffering during the war; and in that point of view also, the prophecy will be found to be borne out by the fact. For in the first place—though the entire duration of the war might be as much as nine years; the period of active hostilities, as we before observed, and consequently of actual suffering from that cause, was but a small portion of the whole, the two campaigns of U. C. 820, and U. C. 821, and the siege of Jerusalem, U. C. 823. Again, if the war was prematurely begun, it was likely to be prematurely terminated; and that it was prematurely begun, is

“elected, he (the Lord) hath cut short the days.” The first part of this declaration assigns the final

safely to be collected from the fact, that the Jews were goaded into rebellion by a succession of unprincipled, rapacious, and oppressive procurators—Antonius Felix, Albinus, and especially Gessius Florus; that, driven as they were to it, by systematic provocation like this, it was not the act of the whole nation, but mainly due to a single faction, originally small and contemptible in numbers, though formidable for their audacity, that of the zealots or Eleazar; that they embarked upon hostilities with the Roman government, in spite of the dissuasions and remonstrances of Agrippa, the king, and of their own principal and leading men; that they had all their measures of defence to concert—all their plans to arrange—and all their preparations to make, at the very time when they were already in a state of open rebellion; and last, but not least, that the only success which they ever gained in the course of the war, was gained at the very outset, in the attack upon Cestius Gallus, when retreating from before the city. This success was fatal to the Jews, by filling them with a false confidence in their own strength, and an equal contempt of their adversaries; and confirming even the waverers in their resolution to throw off the Roman yoke.

The interval between the defeat of Cestius, October, U. C. 819. A. D. 66, and the arrival of Vespasian to take the command of the Roman army, spring, U. C. 820. A. D. 67, was spent, as I have observed, in making such preparations for the contest, in various parts of the country, as the time would permit. The business of putting the two Galilees into a state of defence, was confided by the Jewish sanhedrim of Jerusalem, to Josephus, the historian of the war; and we have his own account both in his *Vita*, and in the *History of the War*, of the steps which he took for that purpose, and with what success. And though it cannot be denied that he laboured with extraordinary zeal and activity to give the utmost effect to his mission—yet the greater part of his history of this period is taken up with an account of the plots and intrigues of John of Gischala, and of certain emissaries from Jerusalem, who did all they could to thwart and oppose him. And though he had raised and disciplined an army,

end proposed by the dispensation of cutting short the days—that some flesh might be saved, which otherwise could not have been the case; the latter, the motive to that effect, or why some flesh was to be saved—which otherwise would not have been the case—viz. regard to the sake of the elect.

I think we may infer from the former of these things, that they who were thus to be saved, were not only persons who must otherwise have been in danger of perishing, (which is self-evident,) but persons, some part of whom had already begun to perish, in consequence of the beginning of the days of vengeance; and the rest of whom would continue to perish, in consequence of the continuance of those days, until all were consumed; unless the days themselves were prematurely abridged, and brought to an end. If so, it must be the unbelieving, and no part of the believing portion of the community, among the Jews, who are hereby intended. These last, never having begun to be destroyed, could not require to be spared from continuing to be destroyed; never having been placed in danger of perishing, never could require to be rescued from that danger.

And hence we may conclude, with respect to the latter of the same things, the regard to the elect, the

not much less than an hundred thousand strong—ready, as he thought, to encounter the Romans, on their approach to the invasion of the country, this immense force was broken and dispersed by a sudden panic, on the first appearance of the enemy; (B. iii. vi. 3;) nor was any effectual resistance to their progress, in the conquest of Galilee, any where made or attempted, except at Jotapata, into which Josephus had thrown himself, and which he defended for forty-seven days against Vespasian in person. Vide B. iii. vii.

motive assigned for such a dispensation as the premature termination of the days, with a view to such an effect as the saving of some, where all must otherwise have perished; that this regard cannot be understood of the mere *safety* of the *elect*; even though the Hebrew Christians were to be supposed the persons denoted by that name. For, until it can be shewn that this portion of the Jewish community in particular were exposed to any more personal risk, at one part of this disastrous period than at another, in the retreat which Providence had provided for their asylum; or that the same power which had kept them in security from the beginning of the Jewish war to the destruction of Jerusalem, could not have preserved them a little longer also: it cannot be assumed that the premature abbreviation of the full term of the days of vengeance, was specially required for their sake.

The truth is, indeed, as the event has proved, and as the intimations of prophecy had long before given reason to expect, that the final end of the consummation even of the most severe and the most calamitous of the Divine judgments upon the Jews, in fulfilment of all that was written, would be not to exterminate, but to punish, that sinful people. They were to be terribly chastised by the hand of God; but not to be annihilated: they were to be rejected and abandoned as his people for a time, but not to be altogether cast off, nor for ever forgotten. And with respect to the reasons of this dispensation, though the great body of the nation had repudiated the Messiah, and still further aggravated that offence by their obstinate rejection of his religion; yet a remnant had received both; and for the sake of the

faithful few, God might be pleased to deal more mercifully with the rest, who though unbelievers, were their brethren according to the flesh. Or rather, what is, indeed, the most probable supposition, we are not to understand by the elect, regard to whom was to produce this effect, simply the believing portion of the Hebrew community, in opposition to the unbelieving, of this day; but the whole series of fathers, patriarchs, and prophets, all the good and holy men of the Jewish nation, from the first; whose faith and obedience had been as exemplary and meritorious, as the unbelief and wickedness of this generation among their posterity, was enormous and entitled to punishment; more especially, the three most illustrious of the number, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the denomination of the elect of God is first and properly applicable, and who had received on sundry occasions from his mouth, the assurance of favour and protection inalienable from them and from their posterity ^c.

^c Leviticus xxvi. 42. 44. 45: "Then will I remember my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember. . . . when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord."

2 Kings xiii. 23: "And the Lord was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet."

Rom. xi. 29: ἀμεταμέλητα γὰρ τὰ χαρίσματα καὶ ἡ κλησις τοῦ

The description of the days to follow, and of their effects immediate or future, terrible and disastrous as they were to be, was doubtless designed to promote the end of the practical admonitions, premised in general, as much as for a prophecy, however exact and particular, of the kind and the order of events about to ensue. It could not fail to have the effect of rousing the fears of the hearers, and predisposing them to be so much the more careful in watching the signs of the times; that they might take instant advantage of the first opportunity to escape—the first conviction of the necessity of obeying the command of immediate flight—from the scene of so much danger, and so much impending calamity and distress. As to the specification of circumstances, or

θεοῦ: and just before, verse 28: *κατὰ μὲν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἔχθροὶ δι' ὑμᾶς· κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν, ἀγαπητοὶ διὰ τοὺς πατέρας.*

The fate which the same prophecy predicts of the city of Jerusalem, is analogous to the destiny which awaited its inhabitants also. It was to be destroyed, levelled with the ground, and given up to be trodden under foot of Gentiles, as it since has been; but with the limitation of *ἄχρι πληρωθῶσι καιροὶ ἐθνῶν*; which implies that when those seasons are fulfilled, it must cease to be trodden down of Gentiles as before, and therefore it must begin to be reoccupied by its own people. Its inhabitants were some of them to fall by the sword, and others to be made captives, and dispersed among all nations; but those who had escaped immediate destruction were to be preserved, and kept in being ever after, though in a state of exile and exclusion from their own country. The completion of the prophecy in behalf of the city, would require this dispensation in behalf of its inhabitants: for Jerusalem could not be restored to the Jews, after fulfilling its appointed times in the possession of Gentiles, unless some of them were both to be spared amidst the general destruction, in the first instance, and also to be kept in being as a distinct people, subsequently.

the account of the particular evils about to be inflicted on the Jews; the coincidence between the prophecy beforehand, and the matters of fact, and the order of their occurrence, subsequently, is truly minute and admirable. Possessing as we do, the historical narrative of Josephus, to direct us in determining the order, or classifying the kinds of the events in question; were we called upon to reduce the complicated disasters of this fatal period, to their most general heads, they would not be found to fall under more divisions than these; first—in respect to those who perished, famine, and the sword; secondly—in respect to those who survived, captivity and dispersion among all nations; thirdly—in respect to the temple and to Jerusalem, total destruction, desolation, and alienation from its former possessors and inhabitants. This enumeration of the distinct kinds of events, in their order, which the evidence of the fact, and the light of history would have required or enabled us to make, the prophecy, so long on record beforehand, anticipates in each of its parts^d.

For first, as to the specific miseries of famine and the sword; the former is alluded to in general terms, under the mention of “great distress, upon the “land,” great tribulation, “*great* wrath upon that “people;” the latter in the words, “And they will

^d Jeremiah xv. 2: “And it shall come to pass, if they say “unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell “them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as *are* for death, to death; “and such as *are* for the sword, to the sword; and such as *are* “for the famine, to the famine; and such as *are* for the captivity, to the captivity.”

“ fall with *the* sword’s edge.” The magnitude of the privations—the degree of suffering—denoted in the first of these instances, is both generally implied by the descriptive epithet of *great*, combined with the mention of the fact of it, and still more significantly by the denunciation of *woe*, to the women who should be with child, and to the women who should be giving suck in those days—annexed to the general description in further prosecution of the subject. I fully agree with bishop Newton, that when our Lord uttered these words, he probably had in his eye the case of Mary of Peræa, so minutely related by Josephus^e; and perhaps more to the same effect, which contemporary history has not preserved to our knowledge, of mothers not only reduced to the unhappy necessity of seeing their infant offspring perishing from starvation before their eyes, (which was doubtless a very common case, in the course of the siege of Jerusalem,) but what was worse, compelled, like this Mary, to sacrifice the strong instincts of maternal affection to the resistless importunity of hunger; prolonging a miserable existence by devouring the fruit of their womb.

Secondly, with respect to the evils of captivity and dispersion; the next member of the same concise, but exact epitome of the course of events, the first part of which we have just quoted, carries on the enumeration of consequences, by specifying the fate of those who must be supposed to have survived the destruction produced by the two previous causes, as clearly as the former, that of those who perished by it; and is not less borne out by the truth of his-

^e De B. vi. iii. 3, 4, &c.

tory, than that was: "And they will fall with *the sword's edge*, and be made captives unto all *nations*," or, as the words may be rendered, "unto *all the Gentiles*^f."

^f The particular prediction, "they will fall with the sword's *edge*," is no doubt, in its primary reference, to be restricted to the carnage and loss of life which the Jews were to sustain between the two periods of the proper commencement and the proper termination of the days of vengeance; and more especially during the siege of Jerusalem. Yet there is no reason why we may not give it a more enlarged comprehension, so as to include the whole of the destruction of life to the Jews, not only from the war at last, but in any other way; and may not illustrate the truth of the prediction by the fulfilment accordingly. The period in question, as devoted to this particular penal purpose of the destruction of life in various ways, may bear date from as far back as U. C. 790 or 791, A. D. 37 or 38, in the first or second of Caius; and extend as low down as U. C. 827 or 828, A. D. 74 or 75, in the sixth or seventh of Vespasian: and while illustrating the truth of the prediction by the requisite instances of the actual consumption of life within this period, taken collectively, we shall do much to illustrate the necessity of that abridgment of the period itself as devoted to an effect like this—which was said to be requisite for the sake of the elect, if any of their posterity, however guilty, were still to be saved from extermination.

In estimating the amount of the loss of life thus occasioned, we must take into account the numbers who perished in the contests between the Jewish and Gentile inhabitants of different cities, the numbers who perished in the war before and after the siege of Jerusalem, and the numbers who perished in the siege itself: in making which estimates, I shall set down only the occasions on which Josephus specifies these numbers; though there are many instances of the destruction of life besides, when we are told that multitudes in general perished, but not how many in particular. Nor shall I consider at present the numbers made prisoners on different occasions; and if not destroyed at the time, yet reserved to perish in various ways after, or to drag on

As to the third and remaining particular, the desolation of Jerusalem, and its alienation from its an hopeless existence in an endless captivity. Under the head, however, of those who perished by the swords of the Romans, we may include such as fell in certain contests in Jerusalem, between the people and the Roman soldiers, before the actual commencement of the war.

First, then, as to the numbers who perished in the contests between Jews and Gentiles, in various instances.

U. C. 791, A. D. 38, at Seleucia, in Upper Asia, (Ant. Jud. xviii. ix. 9.)	50,000
U. C. 819, A. D. 66, on the 12th of Gorpiaeus, (August 21,) a sabbath, at Cæsarea, (B. Jud. ii. xviii. 1.)	20,000
U. C. 819, A. D. 66, at Scythopolis, (B. Jud. Ibid. 3.)	13,000
————— at Ascalon, (B. Jud. Ibid. 5.) ..	2,500
————— at Ptolemais, (Ibid.)	2,000
————— at Alexandria, in Egypt, (Ibid. 8; Cf. also vii. viii. 7. 1114.)	60,000
————— at Damascus, (B. ii. xx. 2: vii. viii. 7. 1114.)	18,000
Sum total.	<u>165,500</u>

Secondly, of the numbers who perished by the sword, before or after the siege of Jerusalem.

U. C. 802. A. D. 49. In Jerusalem at the passover, (Ant. Jud. xx. v. 3. B. ii. xii. 1.)	20,000
U. C. 819. A. D. 66. in Jerusalem, by the soldiers of Florus, Artemisius, (B. ii. xiv. 9.)	3,600
————— in Joppa, by the troops of Ces- tius Gallus, Hyperberetæus, (ii. xviii. 10.)	8,400
————— on mount Asamon, in Galilee, over against Sepphoris, by the detachment of Gal- lus, (Ibid. 11.)	2,000
U. C. 819 or 820. A. D. 66 or 67. in the two battles at Ascalon, by Antonius and his forces, (iii. ii. 1—3.)	18,000
U. C. 820. A. D. 67. Dæsius 25. at Japha, near Jota- pata, by Trajan and Titus Cæsar, (iii. vii. 31.) ...	27,000

former possessors ; in the nature of things this must be the last event of the war, and posterior to the

U. C. 820. A. D. 67. Diesinus 27. on mount Gerizim, by Cerealis (of Samaritans) (Bell. iii. vii. 32.) . . .	11,600
————— From Artemisius to Panemus, at the siege of Jotapata, (Ibid. §. 36.)	40,000
————— Panemus or Lous, drowned or killed at Joppa, (iii. ix. 3.)	4,200
————— Gorpiaeus 8. at Tarichææ, and on the lake of Galilee, (iii. x. 9, 10.)	6,500
————— at Tiberias, (Ibid. §. 10.)	1,200
————— Hyperberetæus 23. at Gamala, (iv. i. 10.)	9,000
————— Hyperberetæus, in the escape from Gischala, (iv. ii. 5.)	6,000
————— November, at Jerusalem, by the Idumæans and the Zealots, (iv. v. 1—3.)	20,500
U. C. 821. A. D. 68. Passover, at Engaddi, by the Sicarii, (iv. vii. 2.)	700
————— Dystrus, in the escape from Gadara to the Jordan, besides a vast multitude drowned in the Jordan, (iv. vii. 4—6.)	15,000
————— Spring, at Betaris and Cepharta- toba, villages of Idumæa, (iv. viii. 1.)	10,000
————— at Gerasa, by L. Aminis, (iv. ix. 1.)	1,000
U. C. 824 or 825. A. D. 71 or 72. at Machærus, by Bassus, (vii. vi. 4.)	1,700
————— In the <i>δρυμὸς</i> , or wood of Jardes, by the same, (Ibid. §. 5.)	3,000
U. C. 826 or 827. A. D. 73 or 74. at Masada, Xan- thicus 15. by their own hands, (vii. ix. 1.)	960
U. C. 827 or 828. A. D. 74 or 75. at Alexandria, of the Sicarii, (vii. x. 1.)	600
————— In Cyrene, and the Pentapolis, by the governor, Catullus, (vii. xi. 2.)	3,000
Sum total	213,960

other two. The matter of fact bears witness to the accomplishment of this prediction, from the time of

Thirdly, as to the numbers who perished in the siege of Jerusalem,

U. C. 823. A. D. 70, from the fourteenth of Xanthicus to the eighth of Gorpiaëus, by famine or the sword (B. vi. ix. 3 ; v. xiii. 7 ; vi. x. 1.) 1,100,000

If we add to this last sum, the other two before collected, the sum total is 1,479,460 : a result enormous as it may appear, yet, if the statements of Josephus are to be believed, or if the correctness of the numeral readings in his text at present, is to be depended on, much below rather than at all beyond the truth. The numbers who perished in the flight from Gadara to the Jordan, he expresses in general terms only, by *πλήθος ἀπειρον* : but the author of the Hebrew history of the same events, entitled Josephus Gorionides, puts them at 92,000 : a statement, which we may have the less hesitation to admit, that Josephus himself says, B. iv. vii. 6, the Jordan was rendered impassable, and the lake Asphaltites itself choked up, with corpses, carried thither in multitudes down the river.

We have no account in the above enumeration of particulars, how many perished in the seditious at Cæsarea (Ant. Jud. xx. viii. 7 ; B. ii. xiii. 7 ; xiv. 5 :)—or at Jerusalem, on the various occasions specified B. ii. xv. 5 ; xvii. 5—10 ; xix. 1—7 ; iv. iii. 12, vi. 3, ix. 10—12 ; v. i. 1—3, iii. 1—or in Tyre, Hippius, and Gadara, (B. ii. xviii. 5 :)—or in Galilee, generally, killed by Placidus (B. iii. iv. 1 :)—or at the taking of Gadara, (B. iii. vii. 1 :)—or at Mount Tabor, killed by Placidus (iv. i. 8)—or in the escape from Jericho to the *ὄρεινῇ* or hill country of Judæa (B. iv. viii. 2 :)—or round about Gerasa, killed by Lucius Annius (iv. ix. 1 :)—or in Idumæa, by Simon Gioræ (iv. ix. 3—8)—or in Hebron, when its inhabitants were slain *ἡβηδόν*, by Cerealis (iv. ix. 9)—and perhaps on other occasions, which may have escaped my notice.

Nor, often as false prophets are said to have appeared, in the course of the period before the war, and to have drawn away multitudes after them, all of whom with their followers were either slain or dispersed by the Roman governors ; are we told, except in one or two instances, what was the number who

the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, to the present day. It is of importance, however, to remark that

perished. In the other cases too, the numbers specified are those of the dead: nothing is said of the wounded, nor how many perished after a battle, from the injuries received therein. There is a still greater omission in the mention of the number of prisoners, on each occasion. If the Romans did not put to the sword all the inhabitants, whether male or female, old or young, in the towns or the country, as different parts severally came into their power—which it is certain they did not, at least in a great many instances—the amount of captives must often have equalled the numbers of the slain. Yet Josephus specifies the *αἰχμαλωτοὶ*, as such, or prisoners reserved for slavery, only at Iapha (2130. B. iii. vii. 31): at Jotapata (1200. B. iii. vii. 36): at Tiberias (36,400. iii. x. 10)—in the escape from Gischala (3000. iv. ii. 5)—at the Jordan (2200. iv. vii. 5)—in Idumæa (1000. B. iv. viii. 1)—and after the capture of Jerusalem, or during the siege (97,000. B. vi. ix. 3). These captives, we may presume, were disposed of in most instances, alike; viz. such as were above the age of seventeen, to labour on the isthmus of Corinth, or in the mines in Egypt, or to be destroyed in the theatres, by each other's hands, as gladiators, or in combats with wild beasts, (B. iv. x. 10; vi. ix. 2,) and those that were under the age of seventeen, to be sold into slavery, to any that would buy them (B. vi. ix. 2).

When we consider too, that in most of these instances, it is clearly the disposal of the male population which is specified; that nothing is said of the female part, whose numbers however would equal those of the male; we may reckon it a very probable supposition that, either by the sword, or by famine, or by captivity and absportation, Judæa was drained of two or three millions of inhabitants; that is, as I endeavoured to prove, in my former work, of one third of its population at least, (vide *Supplem. Diss.* xiii. 224. sqq.); and all this within the space of nine years, which was the duration of the war, as I also shewed (vol. i. *Diss.* xiii. 578. sqq. Cf. *Supplem. Diss.* 431—438), from first to last, viz. U. C. 819. A. D. 66.—U. C. 828. A. D. 75; by far the greatest part of the carnage and loss of life, in every way, being that which was effected between the

the event predicted in this instance was, that Jerusalem, once taken by the Gentiles, in consequence

spring of U. C. 819. A. D. 66, in the first year of the war, and the beginning of the autumnal quarter, U. C. 823. A. D. 70, in the fifth; the date of the capture of Jerusalem. Perhaps the annals of human history no where exhibit an equal amount of the consumption of human life, by the same causes, within the same length of time.

But the days of vengeance did not terminate to the Jews, with the destruction produced by the war of Nero and Vespasian. A breathing space was allowed them, after U. C. 828. A. D. 75; but the sword of the destroyer was again unsheathed against them, forty or forty-one years afterwards, in the eighteenth or nineteenth of Trajan, U. C. 868 or 869. A. D. 115 or 116. At that time the Jews of Libya, about Cyrene, and those of Egypt, under the command of one Andreas or Lucuas, and the Jews of Cyprus, under a certain Artemio, broke out into a fierce rebellion; in which they are said to have committed the most horrible excesses against the Greeks and Romans; excesses too horrible to be conceived or credited, (Dio apud Xiph. lxxviii. 32. Euseb. E. H. iv. 2.) Four hundred and fifty thousand persons are stated to have been thus destroyed by them in Africa and Cyprus; an equal number in each; the city of Salamis in Cyprus, to have been levelled with the ground, and that of Alexandria in Egypt, so much injured, that, as it is noted in the Chronicon of Eusebius, pars ii. 283. ad Ann. Abrah. 2133, Hadrian was under the necessity of restoring it at the beginning of his reign. In this commotion the Jews of Mesopotamia also took an active part. No doubt, such an aggravated provocation from the Jews, stimulated the Romans to an exemplary vengeance in return. Accordingly, though not without an obstinate and bloody resistance, the Jews are said to have been nearly exterminated in Egypt, Africa, and Mesopotamia; in the two former quarters by Marcus Turbo, in the latter by Lusius Quietus, whom Trajan, for the services rendered by him on this occasion, rewarded with the government of Palestine. Thus did the punishment of unbelief overtake the Jews of the Dispersion, at the same distance of time after the close of the

of this war, and levelled with the ground, as the greater part of it was, at the time, should never be

former war, as the destruction of Jerusalem after the Ascension.

Not less disastrous to the nation at large, was their next rebellion in the time of Hadrian, under the command of Barchochab. As among those who pretended to the character of the expected Messiah, after the time of our Saviour, none obtained a more general reception with the Jews, than this impostor; so were the consequences resulting from their delusion, so general and so fatal to them in no instance as in this. Between the war thus occasioned, and the former, many striking particulars of resemblance might be pointed out, as I endeavoured to shew in my Supplementary Dissertations, Diss. x. 177. sqq.: not least of all, with respect to its duration, which was nine years, like that of the former; to the siege of Bethar, answering to that of Jerusalem; and to the extent of the carnage and loss of life, besides the ruin and desolation to the face of the country, produced by it. Fifty castles, nine hundred and eighty-five towns or villages were levelled with the ground; five hundred and eighty thousand persons perished by the sword, and an incalculable multitude by famine, disease, and fire (Dio. Cass. apud Xiphil. lxxix. 14. Cf. Ephraemi Cæsares, Hadrianus, apud SS. Deperdit. Vatican. Collect. iii. 3.); so that the Rabbis tell us, twice the number of living souls perished in the destruction of those days, which came out of Egypt; that is, twice six hundred thousand grown up persons, at least. We learn incidentally from Jerome, that multitudes, after the conclusion of this war, as before, were sold into captivity at a place which he calls the *Mercatus Terebinthi*, that is, the market or fair of the *Turpentine* tree, the *tabernaculum* of Abraham, the spot, which tradition seems to have perpetuated as the locality of the residence of that patriarch, known in the Septuagint version by the name of the oak of Mambre, near Hebron: Gen. xiii. 18; xiv. 13; xviii. 1, &c. Cf. the *De Bello* of Josephus, iv. ix. 7, which places it six stades from Hebron. *Operum*, iii. 679. *ad med.* in Jeremiah xxxi: *Quidam Judæorum hunc locum sic interpretantur: quod capta Jerusalem sub Vespasiano, per hanc viam Gazam et Alexandriam, infinita millia*

rebuilt, nor again be possessed by its own inhabitants, as it had been before that time ; but should continue to be trodden under foot of Gentiles, in the same state of solitude and desolation, to which it had been reduced by them as a consequence of this siege—until the seasons of Gentiles were fulfilled. A new city of Jerusalem might rise up, in the course of time, and in the same vicinity ; but the old city was never rebuilt : and its former inhabitants might still continue for some time longer in possession of Judæa,

captivorum Roman directa sint. alii vero, quod ultima captivitate sub Hadriano: quando et urbs Jerusalem subversa est, innumerabilis populus diversæ ætatis, et utriusque sexus, in mercato Terebinthi venundatus sit. Ibid. 1773. ad calc. in Zachar. xi: Legamus veteres historias, et traditiones plangentium Judæorum, quod in tabernaculo Abrahæ, ubi nunc per annos singulos mercatus celeberrimus exercetur, post ultimam eversionem, quam sustinuerunt ab Hadriano, multa hominum millia venundata sint: et quæ vendi non potuerint, translata in Ægyptum; et tam naufragio et fame, quam gentium cæde truncata.

In all respects, this second visitation seems to have been the counterpart of the first ; and it is much to be regretted that there was no Josephus, or none whose writings have come down to us, to record the story of the sufferings of his nation on this occasion, as well as on the former, and to give us the means of contrasting the two dispensations more closely with each other. The crime of not believing in the true Christ, and the sin of believing in a false Christ, were almost on a par in point of guilt ; and the comparison of these two special visitations, the one for the first, the other for the second of these offences, would shew that they were almost on a par in point of punishment : for the true Christ, was our Lord, the false Christ, was *κατ' ἐξοχήν* Barchochab ; the calamities of the first war were the appointed penalty for the national sin in the rejection of the true Christ, and those of the second, for the repetition of the same offence, or for one tantamount to it, in the reception of the false Christ.

even after the war of Titus; but they were never in possession of its ancient capital, from the time of the conclusion of that war, to this day^g.

^g We are told, Bell. Jud. v. iii. 2, that upon the first approach of Titus with his army, to the siege of the city, about the middle of April, U. C. 823. A. D. 70, he caused the whole of the space, between Scopus and the monument of Herod, (a distance of five stades at least, the former being seven, the latter two stades from the walls of Jerusalem,) to be levelled with the ground. This was the beginning of the *ἐρήμωσις* of Jerusalem.

The suburbs of Jerusalem, before the war, were covered, in all directions, with gardens, vineyards, pleasant plantations, and beautiful buildings. In the course of its progress every thing was destroyed, and laid waste; so that before the capture of the temple, (four months from the commencement of the siege,) there was not a tree within ninety stades of the city, which the Romans had not cut down, (B. vi. i. 1: and before the capture of the rest of the city, (a month later,) there was not one to be found standing within an hundred stades: B. vi. viii. 1. Ἦν δὲ ἐλεινὴ καὶ τῆς γῆς ἡ θεὰ. τὰ γὰρ πάλαι δένδρεσι καὶ παραδείσοις κεκοσμημένα, τότε πανταχόθεν ἠρήμωτο καὶ περικέκοπτο τὴν ὕλην. οὐδεὶς τε τὴν πάλαι Ἰουδαίαν, καὶ τὰ περικαλλῆ προάστεια τῆς πόλεως ἑωρακῶς ἀλλόφυλος, ἔπειτα τὴν τότε βλέπων ἐρημίαν, οὐκ ὠλοφύρατο, καὶ κατεστέναξε τὴν μεταβολὴν παρ' ὅσον γένοιτο. πάντα γὰρ ἐλυμήνατο τὰ σημεῖα τοῦ κάλλους ὁ πόλεμος, καὶ οὐκ ἂν τις ἐξαπίνης ἐπιστὰς τῶν προεγνωκότων ἐγνώρισε τὸν τόπον, ἀλλὰ παρῶν ἐζήτει τὴν πόλιν: Bellum Jud. vi. i. 1.

Upon the final reduction of the city, as well as the temple, Titus gave orders to level all with the ground, except the three towers, called Phasaëlus, Hippicus, and Mariamne, and the part of the city-wall on the west: the former, for their size, their strength, and beauty, to be a monument what kind of defences Roman valour had conquered, the latter as a protection to the military force which he left in possession of the place. Τὸν δ' ἄλλον ἅπαντα τῆς πόλεως περίβολον οὕτως ἐξωμίλισαν οἱ κατασκάπτοντες, ὡς μηδὲ πάποτ' οἰκηθῆναι πίστον ἂν ἔτι παρασχέιν τοῖς προσελθοῦσι. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν τέλος, ἐκ τῆς νεωτερισάντων ἀνοίας, Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐγένετο, λαμπρᾶ τε πόλις καὶ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις διαβοηθείη: Bell. vii. i. 1. Thus was our Saviour's prediction, that not one stone should be

With respect to the latter half of this second division, I have assumed, that as the former was left on another in the temple, and that Jerusalem should be laid desolate, literally fulfilled.

In like manner when Titus was returning after this, from Antioch, U. C. 824. A. D. 71, on his way to Egypt, preparatory to sailing into Italy, Josephus describes his feelings, upon again beholding the same spectacle of ruin and desolation, at the distance of a year, when, *κατὰ τὴν πορείαν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις προσελθὼν, καὶ τὴν λυπρὰν ἐρημίαν βλεπομένην ἀντιθεὶς τῇ τότε τῆς πόλεως λαμπρότητι, καὶ τὸ μέγεθος τῶν ἐρήγγυμένων κατασκευασμάτων, καὶ τὸ πάλαι κάλλος εἰς μνήμην βαλλόμενος, ᾠκτερε τῆς πόλεως τὸν ὄλεθρον, κ', τ. λ. Bell. vii. v. 2.*

Eleazar also, when exhorting his companions in arms at Masada, Xanthicus 15. U. C. 826, or 827. A. D. 73, or 74, to die by their own hands, rather than fall into the power of the Romans, draws a similar picture of the state of Jerusalem, three or four years after the siege, Bell. vii. viii. 7. p. 1116: *ποῦ δ' ἡ μεγάλη πόλις, ἡ τοῦ παντὸς Ἰουδαίων γένους μητρόπολις, ἡ τοσοῦτοις μὲν ἐρυμνῇ τειχῶν περιβόλοις, τοσαῦτα δ' αὐτῆς φρούρια καὶ μεγέθη πύργων προβεβλημένη, μόλις δὲ χωροῦσα τὰς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον παρασκευὰς, τοσαύτας δὲ μυριάδας ἀνδρῶν ἔχουσα, τῶν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς μαχομένων; ποῦ γέγονεν ἡμῖν ἡ τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν οἰκιστὴν πεπιστευμένη; πρόρριζος ἐκ βάρθρων ἀνήρπασται, καὶ μόνον αὐτῆς μνημεῖον ὑπολέλειπται, τὸ τῶν ἀνηρηκότων αὐτὴν στρατόπεδον, ἔτι τοῖς λειψάνοις ἐποικοῦν.*

In like manner Tacitus, *Histor. v. 2: Sed, quia famosæ urbis supremum diem tradituri sumus, congruens videtur, primordia ejus aperire.* Pliny too, *H. N. v. 15.* and Solinus, *Polyhist. xxxv. 4.* speak of Jerusalem in their time, as of a city that had ceased to be.

It is well, indeed, observed by Eusebius, in *Lucam, (SS. Deperd. i. 155. D—158. C.)* that the predicted desolation of Jerusalem, and Judæa in general, whensoever it might begin to take effect, was not intended to be understood of the immediate evacuation of either, by any description of inhabitants, but simply by its own. A new city was founded in the vicinity of ancient Jerusalem, by Hadrian, and called *Ælia Capitolina*. But this was a city of Gentiles; to whom Jerusalem, from the time of its beginning to be laid desolate, was ever after to be given up, to be trodden under foot. Some remains of Ancient

intended to apprise the disciples what the sign of the appearing was destined to be, so this was prin-

Jerusalem, might survive to the time of Hadrian; for it appears from Josephus, that a part of the city, (that ^{is} upon the hill of Sion,) was spared the ravages of war, not having been the seat of the contest between the Jews and Romans. Various authorities also, attest this fact; as Hieronym. ii. 610. *ad calc.* Epp. Criticæ; iii. 65. *ad calc.* in Isaïæ vi.—Theophylact, i. 241. A. in Marcum xiii. Still the new city was almost entirely removed from the site of the old. And as to the temple in particular, Jerome, Opera, iii. 1753. *ad princip.* in Zachariæ viii. asserts that after the rebellion in the time of Hadrian, its floor or area was ploughed up by Titus Annius, or rather Vinus, Rufus, in ignominiam gentis oppressæ; and iii. 476. *ad calc.* in Isaïæ lxiv. that in his own time, it was become *sterquilinum urbis novæ*, quæ a conditore appellabatur *Elia*. Eusebius, Demonstratio Evangelica, v. 13. 273. D. asserts that he had seen with his own eyes the fulfilment of the prediction (Micah iii. 12.) “Sion...shall be ploughed as a field,” τὴν παλαιὰ βοωμένην Σιών ζεύγσει βοῶν ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων ἀνδρῶν ἀρουμένην: and both Jerome and Theodoret attest, from the evidence of their own observation, the fact of the utter desolation of all the sacred precincts, whether of the city or of the temple; Jerome, iii. 13. *ad princip.* Theodoret, iv. 1007. Græcorum Aff. Curatio, Disput. xi. Cf. also, Chrysost. iii. 378. B. in Psalm. cxxi.

As to the occupation of the country from this time forward by its own inhabitants, after losing one third of their numbers under Nero and Vespasian, and again as many under Hadrian, the rest were forbidden to set foot in Judæa, or to come within sight of Jerusalem, under pain of death. Justin, a contemporary of the second war in question, speaks thus of its effects in this respect to the Jews, Apologia i. 71. 5—8: ὅτι δὲ φυλάσσειται ὑφ’ ἡμῶν (sc. the Roman government) ὅπως μηδεὶς ἐν αὐτῇ γένηται, καὶ θάνατος κατὰ τοῦ καταλαμβανομένου Ἰουδαίου εἰσιόντος ᾧρισται, ἀκριβῶς ἐπίστασθε. He reminds Trypho of the same fact, Dialogus, pars i. 169. 3—8. Aristo Pellæus, (Euseb. E. II. iv. 6. 118. D.) Tertullian, Adv. Judæos, cap. 13, Opera, ii. 326: Eusebius, Demonstratio Evang. lib. ii. 33. p. 71. A: lib. vi. 18. 286. A—B. and in Lucam, apud SS. Dep. Va-

cipally directed to warn them what it should not be; in which case, as that was calculated to regu-

ticanam Coll. i. 157. B—D: Theodoret, ii. 848. in Ezech. xxi: Prudentius, Apotheosis, 541—551: Jerome, iii. 65. *ad calc.*: in Isaïæ vii; 617. *ad med.* in Jeremiæ xviii. all attest the fact of the same prohibition. In particular, Jerome, in the following passage, iii. 1655. *ad med.* in Sophoniæ i; which, while it recognises the exclusion of the Jews from their own country still, shews also how, either by means of bribes to the Roman soldiers, or the other authorities appointed to enforce this prohibition in their case, or by the payment of a requisite tax, they purchased the liberty of repairing at certain times to weep over the ruins of their city and temple: Sed usque ad præsentem diem excepto planctu prohibentur ingredi Jerusalem: et ut ruinam suæ eis flere liceat civitatis, pretio redimunt; ut qui quondam emerant sanguinem Christi, emant lacrymas suas, et ne fletus quidem eis gratuitus sit. videas in die quo capta est a Romanis et diruta Jerusalem, venire populum lugubrem; confluere decrepitas mulierculas, et senes pannis annisque obsitos, in corporibus et in habitu suo iram Domini demonstrantes. congregatur turba miserorum, et patibulo Domini coruscante, ac radiante ἀναστράσει ejus; de Oliveti monte quoque crucis fulgente vexillo, (videas,) plangere ruinas templi sui populum miserum; et tamen non esse miserabilem: adhuc fletus in genis, et livida brachia, et sparsi crines, et miles mercedem postulat, ut illis flere plus liceat, &c.

Palestine, though emptied of its native population, and possessed only by Gentiles, might enjoy some degree of prosperity, in common with the rest of the empire, under pagan or Christian emperors. Its final ἐρήμωσις may be dated, perhaps, from the time when it was overrun by the Saracens or Mahommedans. Of its condition from that time to this, it is not necessary to say any thing at present; though from the reports of travellers, ancient or modern, much might be collected, calculated to shew the fulfilment of the prophecy at every period of its intermediate history.

We learn from Chrysostom, i. 435. C. Adv. Judæos iii., that an attempt was made by the Jews, in the reign of Constantine, to reestablish themselves in possession of Judæa, and to rebuild

late their judgment, and to influence their conduct aright at the proper time, so was this to secure them

the temple; which not only failed, but was severely resented by him, and led to the infliction of fresh penalties upon them. The most interesting and important fact of this description, however, is the memorable attempt of Julian, A. D. 363, to rebuild the temple, and to resettle the Jews in their own country; and the miraculous interposition of the Divine providence, by which it was defeated. It is not necessary to inquire into the motives of that attempt. It is sufficient to observe, that its success would have falsified a variety of prophecies of Scripture, and this of the mount among the rest. Let us hear, then, in what manner the Divine author of the prophecy exerted his power to vindicate the truth of his own predictions, against this impious endeavour to make them null and void. Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxiii. cap. i. p. 350, thus records the failure of the attempt. The charge of the execution of the design had been committed by Julian, to Alypius of Antioch, qui olim Britannias curaverat, pro Præfectis. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciæ rector, metuendi globi flammaram prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum: hocque modo elemento destinatius repellente, cessavit inceptum.

Ammianus Marcellinus was a Gentile and contemporary; which renders his testimony above exception. A fragment of an epistle of Julian's himself, Operum 295. C, attests the fact of the failure of the attempt to rebuild the temple, though it is silent about the cause: οἱ γὰρ ἡμῖν ὀνειδίζοντες τοιαῦτα τῶν Ἰουδαίων οἱ προφήται, τί περὶ τοῦ νεῶ φήσουσι, τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῖς τρίτον ἀνατραπέντος, ἐγειρομένου δὲ οὐδὲ νῦν; ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπον οὐκ ὀνειδίζω ἐκείνοισ' ὅς γε τοσοῦτοις ὕστερον χρόνοις ἀναστήσασθαι διενόηθην αὐτὸν, εἰς τιμὴν τοῦ κληθέντος ἐπ' αὐτῷ Θεοῦ. Christian writers, contemporaries of the event, or nearly so, refer to it repeatedly, as beyond all question a special interposition of Providence, to defeat an impious attempt, and as made by the instrumentality of fire. Chrysostom, in particular, i. 435. D—436. E. Adv. Judæos, iii.: a testimony delivered only twenty years after the occurrence—asserts that such traces of the work upon the foundation, as had escaped the ravages of the fire, were still to be seen in his time. Cf. also,

from any error of judgment, and from the consequences of acting under any mistake before it; and the two members would cooperate together towards a common end, both the antecedent and the ultimate safety of the Hebrew Christians—if, as it will appear by and by, as much risk to this safety was to be apprehended from departing before the appointed time, as from continuing after it.

The most cursory inspection of what follows from Matt. xxiv. 23. and Mark xiii. 21. shews that it contains a warning, addressed to the hearers, against some possible misconstruction, and a warning expressed in the strongest language. If then it can be proved that the time to which this admonition relates, must be prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, and even to the commencement of the Jewish war; there can be but one inference as to the misconstruction, to obviate which was the final end of the admonition. It must be some misconstruction which could be possible or probable only before that time, and perhaps only in anticipation of the event which was then to happen.

Now, when we consider that in neither of the Evangelists, who alone record this part of the discourse on the mount, does this warning precede the prophetic summary of the beginning, the progress, and the consummation of the days of vengeance, and yet that it is immediately subjoined unto it; we may

the same writer, i. 441. C. Adv. Judæos iv. 692. C. De Sancto Babyla, et Contra Gentiles: iii. 302. D. in Ps. cx: v. 510. B. De Laudibus S. Pauli, Homilia iv: 753. E. Quod Christus sit Deus. Also, Ambrosium, Ep. 29. ad Theodosium. Zonaras, xiii. 12. vol. ii. 25. A. B.

justly presume that the admonition refers to some matter of fact, which could not properly fall out after the close, or during the continuance of the Jewish visitation itself, but must either precede it altogether, at a greater or a less distance of time, or at the utmost coincide with its commencement only^h. The necessity of the case alone would confirm the truth of this conclusion; the very nature of a warning, addressed to any description of persons, against a certain danger or misconception beforehand, implying that it must be intended for a time when the misconception was still possible, and the danger to which it was liable in its consequences, was still capable of being incurred. Now this, we may reasonably contend, could not be the case with any period later than the beginning of the days of vengeance; before which time either the safety of the Hebrew Christians must have been already provided for, or their security in particular, amidst the common risk, could scarcely be provided for at all.

The same conclusion results from a comparison of these passages with the beginning of the prophecy; the substantial agreement between them being such as to leave no doubt that both relate to the same subject, and inculcate the same caution, and therefore with a reference to the same time, and to the same effect. This time, in the first instance

^h The particle of time, *τότε*, which in both Evangelists connects the beginning of this part with the termination of the last paragraph, is not to be understood of any point of time consecutive on the termination in question; but is rather to be referred to what follows in particular, or else to the point from which the entire series of the predictions, contained in this second division in general, took its rise.

of the allusion to the subject, is plainly supposed to be either anterior to the commencement, or early in the course of the period of suspense, destined to precede the war, and within which all those events were to take place, that were intended as signs, to notify the gradual approach of the end. It is placed beyond a question, however, by the internal evidence of the passages themselves. The period of the *appearing and presence*, in the language of the prophecy, is synonymous with the duration assigned to the days of vengeance ; these last in their effects being only the visible attestation of the fact of the former. Now the time to which the subject-matter of these cautious refers, is clearly anterior to the period of the appearing, and therefore to the period of the days of vengeance ; for the appearing is spoken of in the same passages as still to come, when the matter of fact to which they properly refer is considered as past ; and the matter of fact so referred to, must be something not only destined to precede the appearing, but possibly capable of being mistaken for it, or else the real characteristics of the true appearing, when that should take place, would not be so distinctly contrasted beforehand with certain criteria of such events as these, by virtue of which they might be confounded with the true.

Here, then, I think, we have attained to a just conception of the final end of this part of the prophecy. The matter of fact alluded to in the present instance, was not merely one which, in common with the rest, should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, and in common with them possess the same character of an harbinger and forerunner of that

event, but one which, unlike the rest, should be liable to be considered possessed of a peculiar significance in that respect—not merely intimating the futurity, but declaring the time of the event—not merely preceding, but ushering in the appearing and presence itselfⁱ.

The matter of fact adverted to in each of these instances, is unquestionably one and the same, the rise and success of pretenders to the name of the Christ: with respect to which, that such events were to rank among the signs of the times, preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, or the period of the end—and that they were predicted with that view, may be taken for granted. But, if besides the general character and general virtue of signs of the end, possessed by this class of intermediate events, in common with the rest, the appearance of false Christs contained, or might easily be construed to contain, an use and signification peculiar to itself; we may perceive a reason for both the circumstances of distinction which characterise the mention of this class of signs in particular; the one, its being first specified and insisted on, at the head of the

ⁱ The above representation is both elucidated and confirmed by the parallel place, Luke xvii. 22 and 23, which is substantially the same with the passages under our consideration. Nor can we assign a better reason why St. Luke should have omitted this part of the prophecy on the mount, than that he had anticipated it in his account of the former prophecy. Now there also, it appeared, the time of the event alluded to, would be prior to that of the *παρουσία*—there too, that the fact of that event might be mistaken for the fact of the *παρουσία*—there too, that the special purpose of the warning annexed, was to guard the observers of such a fact, beforehand, against falling into such a mistake.

enumeration of them all, the other, its being reverted to, and again singled out, at the end of it. With respect to the first of these peculiarities, there might be no description of events among those about to be enumerated, whose true use and purpose as a sign it would be more important to ascertain beforehand, and to keep in mind ever after; and with respect to the second, there might be none among all which had been previously enumerated, so liable to be confounded with the sign of the appearing itself, and therefore none, to require so express a caution against being so confounded, as this.

On this construction too, of the nature of this sign in particular, we perceive a reason why the mention of this class of events is always accompanied by admonitions, directions, cautions, the object of which is uniformly to guard against error, mistake, misapprehension, of some kind or another; which is not the case with that of any of the rest: for the events themselves, which the prediction in this instance had in view, were of a nature whose very essence was to mislead, and would have failed of the end of their being, if they had failed of that; and from the nature of the case, too, as events which would be perpetually recurring—which would begin early, and continue late, in the intermediate period—if they were liable to be mistaken, and required to be cautioned against beforehand, at one time, they would be liable to the same mistake, and stand in need of the same caution, at another.

Hence, also, we may probably account for the apparently unconnected and irrelevant manner, in

which our Lord commenced this whole series of disclosures of the future, in answer to the question of the apostles. It being evident that this question, in its obvious import, solicited information about facts, or the circumstances of facts, we may be somewhat surprised, to see the answer all at once warning the inquirers about mistakes, deducible from facts. "Tell us when these things shall be," or "Tell us what is the sign of thy appearing and presence," was the question; "Beware lest any one deceive you;" that is, as it must be evident, "lest any false Christ deceive you," is the reply. There is no inconsistency between these things. Our Lord addresses his answer, if not to the words, yet to the thoughts of the inquirers; to whose minds, from the sense of that personal interest in the fact of the event, which we have shewn they already entertained, the means of judging of the time of the event appearing the most necessary and most desirable thing of all, they might very naturally and appositely be cautioned first against that particular evidence or prognostic of the approach of the event, which their own antecedent convictions and prepossessions with respect to the coming of the thing signified, would render them the more liable to mistake for the true sign of its arrival.

That a serious charge, then, was now given beforehand to the disciples, to beware of false Christs in particular; that the final end of predicting their appearance, and describing their arts and delusions betimes, was to secure the hearers from some danger or other to themselves, connected with the fact of that appearance, may be taken for granted. But what was the motive to the charge? or what the

particular danger, against which the hearers required to be put on their guard, beforehand? To these questions the only answer, which it seems possible to return upon grounds of antecedent probability, is one of the three following: Either that the faith of the Hebrew Christians in our Lord himself, would be endangered by the appearance of false Christs, unless they were cautioned against them beforehand: or that the Hebrew Christians would be led to infer from the fact of the reputed appearance of such Christs, that Jesus Christ was returned in person: or, though they avoided both these risks, that they might be liable to infer from the fate which befell these pretenders to the name of Christ, that the time of the end was arrived, and the days of vengeance were begun, before their true period; and by acting upon that persuasion, expose themselves to some undefined danger, which would imminently affect their safety.

The first of these opinions, indeed, is too monstrous and improbable, to be for a moment entertained. Nor am I aware of any commentator on the prophecy, who has ventured openly to advance it; though it must be confessed that the language of some of them, in reference to this particular, is sufficiently ambiguous to lead to the suspicion that they must have thought it possible an actual danger to the faith of the persons addressed, in the true Christ, from the rise and appearance of false Christs, might have been contemplated by the caution prospectively given them against it.

The two other opinions, however, are so far consistent with probability, and the circumstances of the case, that either of them may be considered en-

titled to some degree of credit, and both may possibly be true. For, with respect to the first—it is far from an improbable supposition, that unless expressly admonished to the contrary, the Hebrew Christians might easily be persuaded, on various accounts, that their Master was returning in person, if ever the passing occurrences of the times were in the slightest degree calculated to countenance such a belief. Their Master had gone away into heaven, with an express assurance that he was sometime to come back thence again; and the time of his return being left indefinite, the futurity of it only at some proper period being distinctly made known—it might be expected early, and it might be expected late; but it must begin to be expected, as soon as he was gone away. In the course of these very predictions, minute and circumstantial as they were, he had spoken of the period of an event, which the prophecy itself circumscribed within the limits of the natural lifetime of some of those who had heard it predicted, as the period of his own *παρουσία*—his appearing and presence; the obvious meaning of which words would seem to imply his reappearing in person, and executing the threatened judgment upon the Jews and Jerusalem, in person. An opinion was current in the infancy of the propagation of the Gospel, that a *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, an end of ages, and a consummation of the period of ages, in some sense or other, was near at hand, and might happen in the lifetime of some of the early converts to Christianity themselves: to the fulfilment of which expectation the personal reappearance of Jesus Christ would be even more necessary, than to the effect of the destruction of Jerusalem. In fact, the esoteric doc-

trine of the Gospel, with respect to the millenary dispensation—so early communicated, and so generally received, yet as far as we have the means of judging, more through the vehicle of oral, than of written tradition—would be abundantly sufficient to account for the reception of a very general belief also, that the personal return of Jesus Christ, after he was personally gone away, to usher in that dispensation and to establish his kingdom upon earth, with every other event preliminary to and concurrent with such an effect, might be expected much earlier than the real truth of the case would be found to warrant; even in the lifetime of some of the original converts to the Gospel.

It should be remembered, that though the present communications were made immediately to apostles, they were intended for the benefit of the whole Hebrew church; and that the knowledge of the things now predicted, was circulated in that church much beyond the limited number of those to whom it was first vouchsafed, appears from that part of the charge brought against Stephen in the Acts, chap. vi. 13, 14. The majority of the Hebrew church would be men of honest, but plain understandings; who might be disposed to make the best use of the light afforded them, but cannot be supposed possessed of all the illumination, and all the exact comprehension of the course or kind of future events, which was the peculiar gift of apostles or prophets. Nor is it necessary to assume that either now, or on any other occasion, was more information about such things communicated, than was absolutely necessary to answer the end proposed by it. Great part of the present discourse was certainly prophetic, but the

remainder was preceptive ; and for obvious reasons, there might be no more of clearness in the one, nor of explicitness in the other, than would still leave room for the exercise of personal sagacity to read the prophecy, and of personal vigilance and attention to apply the warning or instruction contained in it, aright.

Besides, these pretenders to the name of Christ were to perform prodigies, and to exhibit signs and wonders : and signs and wonders, it might be presumed, would be the criteria of the true Christ only ; and the more extraordinary of their kind, the more so. But the true Christ, to perform such things, if really his work, must be come back in person. The false Christs, who arose from time to time, in this intermediate period, as Josephus tells us, appeared in the name, and with the professions of deliverers. Like Moses, they led their followers, first of all, into the deserts ; promising them, like him too, signs and tokens of deliverance. It was enough, then, that they set themselves up for deliverers, and would be noised abroad as such ; the coincidence was so far critical, that deliverance and a deliverer was what the Hebrew Christians, if they went no further than the name, had both a promise to expect, and every reason to desire.

Lastly, it was not ocular testimony, but common fame, which in every instance of the fact, was first to acquaint the believing Jews with the appearance of these impostors, and the character to which they laid claim ; and common fame, magnifying the character, and exaggerating the credentials of pretenders to the name of the Christ, starting up unobserved, and by stealth, in the secret corners of the city, or

in the silence and solitude of the deserts—aided by the consequent concealment of their persons—might give occasion to false hopes and misconceptions, on the part of the artless and unwary among the disciples themselves, which a nearer inspection, and the testimony of their own senses, would doubtless have prevented.

We find accordingly, the practical injunctions which accompany the prediction of the appearance of such persons, to be all of a description calculated to obviate even the possibility of such mistakes as these ; warning the hearers beforehand, so far from believing such accounts, as authorizing such expectations, not even to lend an ear to them ; to reject them, as soon as heard of, like idle tales, unworthy of a moment's regard or recollection. Were they told that the Christ was in the closets—let them not listen to it ; were they told he was in the deserts—let them not go forth to ascertain the fact ; but in a word, under all circumstances of such a rumoured return of the Christ, let them take no trouble to verify the truth of a fact, which should uniformly turn out to be false—let them dismiss all such reports as equally unfounded—let them distrust all such appearances as equally vain and illusory, and equally calculated to lure to their destruction, all who should be foolish enough to place any faith in their reality.

The final end, then, of these cautions might be a considerate and benevolent regard to the safety of the Hebrew Christians, as directly concerned in their observance. It is well known that even the success of these impostors with the people, was only the more fatal to themselves and their adherents. As often as they appeared, they were attacked, cut

to pieces, or dispersed by the Roman government ; which regarded them in the light of dangerous enemies, and a public nuisance. With reason, then, might our Saviour forewarn his own disciples in the strongest manner, not to do any thing which should cause them to be in the least degree mixed up with such attempts as these. It was not to be expected that the Roman authorities in Judæa, the instruments of Providence in resenting and punishing the criminal artifices of these impostors, would draw any line of distinction between the followers of the true Christ, and the adherents of a false Christ, if both appeared alike in the character of the disturbers of the public peace. The very name of the Christ was rendered odious in the ears of the constituted authorities, and a signal of alarm to the vigilance of the civil government, by the repeated attempts of these men. They assumed the name of the Christ of the nation, and their followers were known as the followers of the Christ of the nation—and by what other name could the Christian Jews themselves, as a party in the community, or as one sect of the Jews in contradistinction to the rest, be known to the Roman government, if they put themselves forward, or came under its cognizance directly, in that capacity^k?

^k It seems to have been wisely ordered by Providence, with a view to guard the Hebrew Christians against the risk of being ordinarily confounded by the Roman government with the followers of these false Christs, that the name of Christian first became the denomination of the followers of the true Christ, abroad, and continued to be so, chiefly, abroad ; that the denomination given to them, first, and sustained by them afterwards, in their own country, was that of the Nazaræi, or Nazarenes : Cf. Acts xxiv. 5. vi. 14.

This brings me to the consideration of the third opinion, above enumerated ; that, supposing the disciples to have escaped the risk implied in the other two cases, they might yet be liable, from the evidence of what was seen, in repeated instances, to befall these Pseudo-Christ's and their adherents, to another mistake, equally dangerous to themselves in its consequences—the mistake of prejudging the beginning of the days of vengeance, before the time. If they considered on whom these calamities were inflicted in such instances, and by whom, and in consequence of what ; they might be tempted, at first sight, to pronounce them the most significant warnings of the times—a visiting of the national sin in kind ; the Jews, who had deserved to suffer for their rejection of the true Christ, being thus made to suffer by their reception of a false Christ. Now, such a prejudication as this, to say the least, was calculated to cause the observers personal uneasiness and alarm, if nothing more ; which, unless purposely relieved beforehand, might have led to a premature secession of the believing part of the Jewish community, from the midst of their unbelieving countrymen. Yet their retreat from Jerusalem, or from Judæa, at any period before the time appointed by the Divine providence, would have directly tended to confound the Christians with those tumultuary and insurgent bands, whose repeated appearance kept the Roman government in a state of constant alarm. When the war had once broken out, and the great body of the nation were in open rebellion, a part who separated themselves from the rest, would be welcomed by the Romans as faithful friends and obedient subjects ; but until then, the attempt to withdraw in a

body to any other quarter, would have encountered as much opposition from them, as it afterwards met with encouragement, and would have drawn down as much personal injury on those who partook in it, by their means—as they were afterwards saved from, by the same.

It appears to me, then, a very probable conjecture that the prospective warning addressed by our Saviour to his disciples, with reference to the appearance of false Christs, was designed to obviate a mistake of this kind, and its possible consequences to their safety, present or future—more than for any other purpose. And therefore it is, that he contrasts with these partial and precarious grounds of persuasion, to regulate their judgment of the time or the event of such a fact as his own appearing, the true characteristics, which should precede and discriminate that event, both as to the evidence of its proximity beforehand, and to the evidence of its effects, afterwards: predicting, with respect to the former, that the true symptoms of the coming of Christ, whenever it took place, should be something, possessing an ubiquity and a visibility like that of the lightning, which issuing from one part under heaven is present at the same moment in the opposite part of the heaven; and flashing at first from the east, is yet sensibly visible even unto the west; whereby he opposes its proper testimony to any other species of the evidence of it, which must be inquired after, in order to be seen—the light of which must be circumscribed, and confined to spots—to the privacy of the secret chamber, or to the solitude of the desert: and foretelling with respect to the latter, that the effects of the real appearing, unlike those of these partial

and local visitations, should be every where felt, every where witnessed, every where destructive alike; wherever the unbelieving part of the community was to be found, whether in Galilee, Judæa, or Jerusalem, there also the punishment of their unbelief should overtake them; just as, wherever the carcass was lying, ready to be devoured, there the birds of prey would be assembled, ready to devour it¹.

¹ Though no matter of fact is capable of being more fully substantiated by the testimony of contemporary history, than this, of the repeated appearance of pretenders to the name and character of the Jewish Messiah, during the interval between the Ascension and the commencement of the Jewish war; the fact that any one ever arose, laying claim to that title, before the birth, or between that time and the beginning of the ministry, of our Saviour, is just as destitute of support or confirmation from external testimony of any kind. See vol. ii. of this work, page 531—548.

We are authorized, I think, to infer from this distinction, that it was necessary the true Messiah should first appear, and first be rejected, at least by the great body of the nation, before any pretender to that title could start up among them, and obtain any success with them: that, consequently, it was a judicial infatuation, by which the Jews were given up at last to the delusions of false Christs, after having denied and rejected the true. For what reason will account for the rise of Pseudo-Christs in such numbers, after a certain time, which would not make it equally probable that they should have appeared before that time; except it be the overruling providence, which would not permit these impostors to start into being, and to meet with any success, until the preaching of the true Christ had been tried, in its proper order of time, and been proved by the event, through the impenitence and unbelief of the nation, to have failed of its effect? Not only is there no evidence of any such historical character as a false Christ, up to the period of the Gospel ministry, but not even for seven years, and more, after that, while the propagation of Christianity was still confined to the

Having said thus much of the first of the classes of the signs originally enumerated, I shall conclude

Jews, and had not yet been thrown open to the Samaritans ; a period, as I had occasion to shew in my former work, (vol. i. Diss. xiii.) devoted “ to the confirmation or making good the “ covenant with many ;” that is, with that portion of the Jewish community for the time being, emphatically called the *ἐκλογὴ*, who received and believed in the true Christ, notwithstanding his rejection by the rest. The first instance of the appearance of any person among the Jews, who would answer to the description of a false Christ, occurs U. C. 797 or 798. A. D. 44 or 45, fourteen or fifteen years after the Ascension.

If, however, the appearance and success of these impostors was thus judicial, this would be the strongest of reasons why we should take it for granted that the faithful few, among the Hebrews, who had received our Lord, would be preserved both from the infatuation which blinded the rest of the nation in their behalf, and from the dangerous consequences, entailed on themselves and their followers, by their attempts. And indeed our Lord, on the occasion to which I lately referred, foretold it should be so ; and contrasting the characteristics of these pretenders to the name of Christ, with the distinctive attributes of the true Christ, had specified this, as not the least significant intimation of the falseness of their character, that the true sheep should hear them not ; whatever success they met with, it must be among the outcasts from his own fold.

Nor is this all. It may reasonably, I think, be inferred, that diabolical agency was to be in some manner or other concerned in instigating the appearance, and supporting the pretensions of these impostors. It is predicted (Matt. xxiv. 24 ; Mark xiii. 22.) that they should work *σημεῖα* and *τέρατα*, the usual scripture description of wonders or miracles—and those too *μεγάλα*, or wonders of an extraordinary kind—to give credibility to their pretensions. This we may be assured they could not do, by any power of their own ; and that they would not do, by any power derived from (though not without the permissive sufferance of) God. What then are we to suppose, but that they would be enabled to work them by the assistance of evil spirits ? It is not unreasonable, in itself, to presume that created intelligences, of

with the consideration of the next in order to it, “ Wars and rumours of wars,” which is still neces-

an order superior to the human, are capable of producing effects, differing from the course and experience of nature, and visible to the senses of man, yet transcending the ability of human power to emulate, and of human wisdom to explain ; and therefore so far deserving the name of miracles. Miracles of this description, unless the power of God is specially interposed to prevent them, may be wrought in support of error and delusion, as well as miracles of a contrary description in support of the truth ; false miracles, doubtless, because wrought in support of false doctrine or a false belief, and very different in their own nature from miracles wrought in confirmation of the truth—but not unreal as matters of fact, any more than the others. Such miracles does St. Paul describe, as destined to be the characteristics of the man of sin, in his season, that is, of Antichrist, when he appears ; 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, and 11 ; ascribing their effect, at the same time, to the *ἐνέργεια πλάνης*, the strong delusion, which God should permit to cooperate with them, and to predispose the minds of the subjects of their influence to be affected by them accordingly, that so they might believe in THE LIE, because they had rejected the love of THE TRUTH.

The fact is, that each of the Evangelists, but especially St. Mark, assigns such an object not simply to the appearance of these false Christs, but to the signs and wonders which they were to exhibit, as can suit only to the views and designs of evil spirits, or of evil men as actuated directly by them. They were intended as a snare to the believers in the true Christ : they were to be wrought *πρὸς τὸ ἀποπλανᾶν, εἰ δυνατόν, καὶ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς*. It would be indifferent to this immediate purpose, what the final end of such delusion was to be ; whether to shake the faith of the elect in the true Christ, or under the influence of some misapprehension or other, to lead them into dangers which might prove fatal to their safety. It is enough that we know from our Lord's assurance, one express object of these machinations to have been the destruction of the Hebrew Christians—that to kill, to slay, to scatter these, if possible, the false Christs described as thieves and robbers were destined to come : and this would be an additional reason, considering with whom they

sary to complete the account of this and the preceding division.

would have to do, as not flesh and blood, but spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, the powers and principalities of darkness—why our Lord should caution his disciples so earnestly beforehand, to be at all times upon their guard against the risk to their safety, from this quarter in particular.

It has often been remarked, that about the time of the birth of our Saviour, a general expectation prevailed in the East, of the appearance of some illustrious person, as destined then to take place, whom the Jews in particular believed to be their Messiah. The false Christs who appeared from time to time, humanly speaking, might take advantage of this expectation, or derive considerable assistance from it, in their success with the people. But the fact of this expectation of the Messiah, about the period of their appearance in general, will not account for the circumstance of the time of their appearance in particular. It will not explain why they should all have appeared long after the birth of Christ, and none of them ever before it, while the same expectation of the Messiah was prevalent before the birth of Christ, and with the same degree of confidence and universality, as after it. It is upon record, that before the birth of the Christ, at a solemn deliberation of the Jewish sanhedrim, upon the meaning and import of the prophecies relating to the time of his appearance, it was concluded the period of his manifestation could not be delayed more than fifty years. We have, in fact, only to turn to Luke ii. 25 and 38, to see proofs of the general expectation of the advent of the promised Comforter and Redeemer of Israel, just at the time when the birth of our Lord actually took place; not to mention Luke i. 13, which contains implicit proof of the same thing, or Luke iii. 15; John i. 20. 46. 49. The title too of *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, (Matt. xi. 3; Luke vii. 19,) which seems to have been the familiar designation for him, absolutely, before the time of his actual appearance, as him who was expected to come, whether yet come or not, demonstrates the same conclusion. Perhaps, too, we may add to this evidence the question of the Magi, Matt. ii. 2: *ποῦ ἔστιν ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῆς Ἰουδαίας*, as implying the knowledge not

In the first place, it is an obvious remark that a prophecy to hear of wars, and rumours of wars—

only of the fact of the birth of the person, about whom they inquired, but of the truth of the character in which he was born. Herod and the rest of the Jews understood this to be an inquiry after the Christ. In this case, too, the expectation of the birth of such a personage about this time, abstractedly considered, without reference to the particular individual who should prove to be he, would be shewn not to be confined to the locality of Judæa, but to be prevalent all over the East.

In fact, we have the testimony not only of Josephus, but also of Tacitus, Suetonius, and others, to the prevalence of the belief in question, and in the quarter in question, at a time not merely after, but before, and at the period of the nativity; for they speak of it as an ancient and confident persuasion, as well as a general one, throughout the East. Thus Josephus, *B. Jud.* vi. v. 4: τὸ δὲ ἐπάραν αὐτοὺς μάλιστα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον, ἦν χρησμός ἀμφίβολος ὁμοίως ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὐρημένος γράμμασιν, “ὡς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκείνον ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας τις αὐτῶν ἄρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης.” τοῦτο οἱ μὲν ὡς οἰκείον ἐξέλαβον, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν σοφῶν ἐπλανήθησαν περὶ τὴν κρίσιν. ἐδήλου δ’ ἄρα περὶ τὴν Οὐεσπασιανοῦ τὸ λόγιον ἡγεμονίαν, ἀποδειχθέντος ἐπὶ Ἰουδαίας αὐτοκράτορος. Cf. Zonaras, *Ann.* xi. 16. 575. C. D: who observes further, τούτου δὲ τοῦ χρησμοῦ μέμνηται καὶ Ἀππιανὸς ἐν τῷ εἰκόστῳ δευτέρῳ λόγῳ τῆς ἱστορίας αὐτοῦ Ῥωμαϊκῆς.

Tacitus, *Histor.* v. 13: Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum litteris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur. quæ ambages Vespasianum ac Titum prædixerat. sed vulgus more humanæ cupidinis, sibi tantam fatorum magnitudinem interpretati, ne adversis quidem ad vera mutabantur.

Suetonius, *Titus Fl. Vespasian*, 4, 8: Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus et constans opinio: esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. id de imperatore Romano, quantum eventu postea patuit prædictum, Judæi ad sese trahentes rebellarunt.

Under these circumstances, it would certainly be a singular thing that no person should have taken advantage of the general expectation of the Messiah, existing among the Jews, to ap-

the utmost predicted in this instance—by no means amounts to a prediction of the existence and fact of

appear in that character, before the birth of Christ, if the fact that so many appeared, pretending to the title of the Messiah, after the birth of Christ, is to be accounted for simply by the prevalence of the expectation in question.

It is well observed by bishop Newton, in his commentary on the prophecy, that Josephus has carefully abstained from mentioning the name either of the Christ, or of any false Christ; as often as he records the fact of the appearance of such impostors, calling them false prophets, jugglers, deceivers, or the like, but never once false Christs. No doubt he had his reasons for this distinction; reasons in all probability the same which produced his total omission of the mention of Christianity also, in any part of his history—as if no such thing had been known or heard of in the world in his time; and yet before he wrote his history of the Jewish war, and much more before he wrote his Jewish Antiquities, Christianity had more than spread through the extent of the Roman empire, and was already professed in parts of the world far beyond its extremest bounds. There can be little question, however, that by these characters he means false Christs, properly so called; and that every appearance of such a character recorded by him, for the interval between the Ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem, is the appearance of a false Christ. Let us specify these appearances in their order.

First, Ant. Jud. xviii. iv. 1: U. C. 789. A. D. 36, in the last year of the government of Pilate, and the twenty-second of Tiberius, a Samaritan impostor (*ἀνὴρ ἐν ὀλίγῳ τὸ ψεῦδος τιθέμενος, καὶ ἐφ' ἡδονῇ τῆς πληθύος τεχνάζων τὰ πάντα*) assembles the Samaritans in great numbers, at a village called Titharaba, preparatory to ascending mount Gerizim with them, under pretence of pointing out the place there, where the *ἱερά σκεύη* had been concealed in the time of Moses. Pilate fell upon them, before the attempt was put into execution, and dispersed them by force of arms. Whether this man is to be considered a false Christ, does not appear; though, that he laid claim to a prophetic or supernatural character, is evident from the above account. As

such wars. Wars, which are only heard of, must still be at a distance, must still be only in medita-

a Samaritan, indeed, in whatsoever capacity he might profess to appear among his own countrymen, we may take it for granted he could meet with no success among the Jews. It is a singular coincidence, however, that Simon Magus, who appears from the description given of him in the Acts, chap. viii. 9—11, to have been passing himself off, among the Samaritans, for some extraordinary character, as *ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ μεγάλη*, sometime previous to the coming of Philip the Evangelist among them—(the time of which was the next year to this transaction in Josephus, U. C. 790. A. D. 37. see my Diss. vol. i. Diss. xiii.) must have flourished about that period; and might even be the impostor described by Josephus; for it does not appear that this impostor perished, in consequence of the attack of Pilate, though he and his followers were put to the route. Nor does he seem to have lost any credit with the nation, in consequence of the failure of the attempt so occasioned; as the principal men among the Samaritans are said to have made the violence of Pilate the ground of a specific complaint against him, before Vitellius the governor of Syria, which led to his removal from office. Be this as it may, Simon Magus might be one of the school of this impostor, or encouraged by his example and success to set himself up, so shortly after, in the same character.

Next to this 'impostor, in point of time, some commentators place Dositheus, also a Samaritan; who is said to have appeared in the character of the Messiah, or of some extraordinary person, like Simon. But Dositheus, to judge from the accounts about him, in my opinion would come too late to be comprehended within the scope of the prophecy, in such of its particulars as lie between the Ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem. He was most probably a Gnostic, and of the school of Simon.

Again, Ant. Jud. xx. v. 1: U. C. 797 or 798. A. D. 44 or 45, when Cuspius Fadus was Procurator of Judæa, one Theudas, *γοῆς τῆς ἀνῆρ*, pretending to be a prophet, persuades numbers of the people to follow him with their possessions (*κτήσεις*) to the Jordan, promising to divide the water, and “to afford them an “easy passage across:” *δίωδον παρέξειν αὐτοῖς ῥαδίαν*. This, I apprehend, is the first instance of an historical character, who may

tion; and what is yet at a distance may possibly never arrive, what is only in meditation peradven-

be considered to answer to the description of a false Christ among the Jews: and it would be a singular circumstance, supposing the date of his appearance to be U. C. 797. A. D. 44, that it coincided with the time of St. Paul's first circuit to the Gentiles; see my Diss. vol. i. Diss. xiii. 575. Fadus destroyed many of this man's followers; and made prisoner and beheaded the man himself.

Again, in the account of this first circuit of St. Paul's above referred to, when he was got no further than Paphus in Cyprus, the place which he visited first, and consequently early after his setting out, U. C. 797. A. D. 44, we meet with a reference to a certain Barjesus, a Jew, described as a magician and a false prophet, Acts xiii. 6; which implies that, like Simon Magus, he must have given himself out as some superior character, though perhaps not as the Messiah; besides that, whatever was the character in which he professed to appear, it was not in Judæa, but in Cyprus. The Jews of Cyprus would seem to have been peculiarly addicted to magic; for Josephus also mentions a Jew, called Simon, a native of that island, and a professed magician in the time of Felix, and consequently a contemporary of his own: Ant. Jud. xx. vii. 2.

Again, Ant. xx. viii. 6: U. C. 808 or 809. A. D. 55 or 56, under the government of Felix, these impostors are found to appear in swarms, as it were; the time of their rising up in such numbers, both here and also B. ii. xiii. 4, being made to synchronise with that of the appearance of the Sicarii, or Assassins, (see my Diss. vol. ii. Diss. i. 7,) not long prior to St. Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, before he was sent to Rome: *οἱ δὲ γόητες καὶ ἀπατεῶνες ἄνθρωποι τὸν ὄχλον ἔπειθον αὐτοῖς εἰς τὴν ἐρημίαν ἔπεισθαι. δείξειν γὰρ ἔφασαν ἐναργῆ τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ πρόνοιαν γινόμενα. καὶ πολλοὶ πεισθέντες τῆς ἀφροσύνης τιμωρίας ὑπέσχον. ἀναχθέντας γὰρ αὐτοὺς Φῆλιξ ἐκόλασεν.* So the War, ii. xiii. 4: *πλάνοι γὰρ ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀπατεῶνες προσχήματι θειασμοῦ, νεωτερισμοῦ καὶ μεταβολᾶς πραγματευόμενοι, δαιμονῶν τὸ πλῆθος ἀνέπειθον, καὶ προῆγον εἰς τὴν ἐρημίαν, ὡς ἐκεῖ τοῦ Θεοῦ δείξοντος αὐτοῖς σημεῖα ἐλευθερίας. ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁ Φῆλιξ, ἐδόκει γύρ ἀποστάσεως εἶναι καταβολή, πέμψας ἵππεῖς καὶ πεζοὺς ὀπλίτας, πολὺ πλῆθος διέφθειρε.* Let the

ture may never be executed. It is of great importance to allow its full weight to this peculiarity of

reader attend here to the circumstance of their leading their followers into the wilderness—their promises of signs and wonders, absolutely, or signs and wonders of deliverance—which afford the best commentary on the prophecy.

Again, as an instance of the deceptions in question, both the Antiquities, xx. viii. 6, and the War. ii. xiii. 5, subjoin here the history of the attempt of the Egyptian false prophet, alluded to also Acts xxi. 38. Of this man's appearance, Cf. my former work, vol. ii. Diss. i. 7. His history, as I apprehend, was as follows: he appeared first, probably at the Passover, U. C. 809. A. D. 56, and at that time led away into the wilderness, as we learn from the Acts, the four thousand sicarii. No doubt his object in going forth from Jerusalem, into that quarter, was to collect more force. He was returning, in all probability, after the Pentecost, next ensuing, out of the wilderness, with a body of 30,000 followers, and approaching the city by way of mount Olivet, (all this we are told in the War,) promising (as we learn from the Antiquities) *ἐκείθεν ἐπιδείξαι, ὡς, κελεύσαντος αὐτοῦ, πίπτοι τὰ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων τείχη, δι' ὧν τὴν εἴσοδον αὐτοῖς παρέξειν ἐπηγγέλ- λητο*: when his progress was stopped by Felix. Of his immediate followers (so the Antiquities) four hundred were killed, and two hundred made prisoners; of the body of his followers in general (so 'the War) the greater part were destroyed, and the rest dispersed.

Again, Ant. Jud. xx. viii. 10: U. C. 813. A. D. 60. under Festus; *πέμπει δὲ Φῆστος δύναμιν ἵππικὴν τε καὶ πεζικὴν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀπατηθέντας ἀπὸ (leg. ὑπὸ) τινος ἀνθρώπου γόητος, σωτηρίαν αὐτοῖς ἐπαγγελλομένου καὶ παῦλαν κακῶν, εἰ βουλευθείεν ἔπυσθαι μέχρι τῆς ἐρημίας αὐτῶ. καὶ αὐτὸν τε ἐκέκων τὸν ἀπατήσαντα, καὶ τοὺς ἀκολουθήσαντας διέφθειραν οἱ πεμφθέντες.*

Again, B. vi. v. 2: we have an account of the appearance of one of these impostors, on Lous 10. U. C. 823. A. D. 70. the very day when the temple was burnt to the ground. Six thousand of the Jews in the temple, in obedience to his command, having taken refuge on the last remaining *στοὰ*, or cloister of the outer temple, were there burnt by the Romans, along with the cloister, or perished by the sword in attempting to escape from it:

the language of the prophecy, and to construe it according to its literal import; for it would be in-

*τούτοις αἴτιος τῆς ἀπωλείας ψευδοπροφήτης τις κατέστη, κατ' ἐκείνην κη-
ρύξας τὴν ἡμέραν τοῖς ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως ὡς “ ὁ Θεὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερόν ἀναβῆναι
“ κελεύει, δεξομένους τὰ σημεῖα τῆς σωτηρίας.” πολλοὶ δ' ἦσαν ἐγκάθετοι
παρὶ τῶν τυράννων τότε πρὸς τὸν δῆμον προφήτῃαι, προσμένειν τὴν ἀπὸ
τοῦ Θεοῦ βοήθειαν καταγγέλλοντες, ὡς ἤττον αὐτομολοῖεν, καὶ τοὺς ἐπάνω
δέους καὶ φυλακῆς γινομένους ἔλπις παρακρατῶη.*

It is not necessary, for the illustration of the prophecy on the mount, to pursue the history of Jewish false Christs later than this point of time. We are told, however, B. vii. xi. I. that U. C. 827 or 828. A. D. 74 or 75. the last year of the war, (see my Diss. vol. i. Diss. xiii. and Supplem. Diss. p. 431—438. and Diss. x. 177—191.) Jonathan, one of the Sicarii, who had escaped to Cyrene, *οὐκ ὀλίγους τῶν ἀπόρων ἀνέπεισε προσέχειν αὐτῷ, καὶ προήγαγεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, σημεῖα καὶ φάσματα δείξειν ὑπισχνούμενος.* This man was by trade a weaver. Catullus, the governor of the Pentapolis of Africa, destroyed or dispersed his followers, and made Jonathan his prisoner, sparing his life himself, but sending him to Rome, where he was put to death by Vespasian: Joseph. Vita, 76.

After this, I am not aware of any more false Christs, until the appearance of the celebrated impostor Barchochab in the reign of Hadrian; unless the two men, Andreas and Artemio, who are mentioned as the ringleaders of the Jews of Libya, of Cyprus, and of Mesopotamia, in their rebellion, in the 18th or 19th of Trajan, are to be reckoned among the number. Barchochab assumed his name (which means the son of the star) in reference most probably to the prophecy, Numbers xxiv. 17. Eusebius, E. H. iv. 6. 118. C. observes upon it, *ὡς δὴ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ φωστῆρ αὐτοῖς καταλυθῶς, κακοῦμένοι τε ἐπιλάμψαι τερατευόμενος.* But he is said to have possessed the secret of breathing out fire and smoke, by some contrivance or other, probably similar to what Diodorus Siculus, Fragm. lib. xxxiv. vol. x. 102, 103. relates of Ennus, the ringleader of the revolt of the slaves in Sicily, about B. C. 86: *τελευταῖον διὰ τινος μηχανῆς πῦρ, μετὰ τινος ἐνθουσιασμοῦ, καὶ φλόγα διὰ τοῦ στόματος ἤφει, καὶ οὕτω τὰ μέλλοντα ἀνεφοῖβαζεν. εἰς γὰρ κάρνον, ἣ τι τοιοῦτο, τετρημένον ἐξ ἑκατέρου μέρους, ἐντίθει πῦρ, καὶ τὴν*

deed repugnant to the faith of history, as I have shewed already, to assume that the existence and fact of actual wars, between the time of the delivery of the prophecy, and the destruction of Jerusalem, was the particular event intended by this allusion to the hearing, or the rumours, of wars beforehand.

Besides, however, this consideration of the truth of history; the canons which we laid down above, the obvious language of the prediction itself, and the still plainer intimation furnished by the admonition connected with it, render it impossible not to conclude that the matter of fact predicted in this instance, is not wars, but rumours, reports, or threats of wars; nor yet rumours, reports, or threats of wars, affecting the peace of the world at large, and Judæa no more than any other country, but specially concerning the peace and tranquillity of the Jewish community; nor yet such things, as confined to the unbelieving part of that community, but as equally matter of personal interest and concern to the believing also; nor yet rumours, reports, or threats of wars, affecting these in common with the rest, such as the Jewish people might ordinarily expect to encounter, without much alarm, or fear for the consequences; but such, as under the circumstances of the case, would be eminently calculated to excite most of terror and dismay in the

συνέχειν αὐτὸ δυναμένην ἕλην. εἶτα ἐντιθεὶς τῷ στόματι, καὶ προσπνέων, ποτὲ μὲν σπινθήρας, ποτὲ δὲ φλόγα ἐξέκαεν. Barchochab exercised the most horrible cruelties on the Christians who fell into his power. He was supported with all the influence of the celebrated rabbi Akibah—the father of the rabbinical lore of the present day; whom the Romans, having at last made prisoner, are said to have flayed alive.

apprehension of them, and to prove most calamitous and disastrous in their consequences.

The fact of two such reports, or menaces of war, particularly affecting the Jews, and no other community of the ancient world, in the interval between the delivery of the prophecy and the destruction of Jerusalem, happens to be on record; the nature of which is in all respects answerable to the description of it thus given beforehand by the prediction. It is a singular coincidence that, as there were three Roman emperors, and no more, between the time of Tiberius, in the sixteenth of whose reign the prophecy was delivered, and the time of the destruction of Jerusalem—Caius, Claudius, and Nero—the two first of these, almost at equal distances of time asunder, menaced the Jews with a war, which, to the eye of human observation, seemed all but inevitable, and the last actually carried it into effect. On the first occasion, nothing but the opportune assassination of Caius; and on the second, nothing but the most active exertions, on the part of the principal men among the Jews, and the timeliest submission, on the part of the nation at large, saved them from the impending danger—Caius having already commanded the president of Syria, Petronius, to carry his orders for the erection of his statue in the temple, into execution, at the point of the sword; Claudius having in some measure declared war against the Jews, as it was, by ordering all Jews to quit Rome and Italy within a given time^m.

^m The time of the first of these events was U. C. 793—794. A. D. 40—41; that of the second was U. C. 802. A. D. 49. See my former work, vol. i. Diss. iv. App. iii. 239—244. (Supplem.

In both these cases, however, the threatening storm passed over, and the horizon again grew clear; for our Lord had forewarned his disciples that such things must happen, such alarms must arise, and such apprehensions must have cause to be entertained; but the end should not be yet.

The apparent certainty of a contest with the power of Rome, the mistress of the world, under any circumstances would be a serious thing in the estimation of every reflecting Jew; from the fact of which he could anticipate nothing but mischief and disaster to his own country: the idea of the same thing would be doubly alarming to those, who, like the Hebrew Christians, were previously aware, not only that God designed, in process of time, to bring some great national calamity upon their country, but also that the destined instruments, by which he was to work in carrying it into effect, were the arms of Rome. It might be necessary, then, and it would doubtless be only benevolently considerate in our blessed Lord, for the sake of tranquillizing his disciples under such forebodings, until the time when to take the alarm would be the one thing needful with a view to their preservation from the common ruin—to give them reason to know beforehand, that however dark and menacing the aspect of political affairs—however inevitable such a catastrophe as a

Diss. 378, 379,) and vol. ii. Diss. i. 14—17. (Supplem. Diss. 439, 440.)

Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* xix. i. 2, says of the former, (when certainly the danger of a rupture with the imperial government was the most imminent, and to all appearance unavoidable,) ἔθνη τε τῶ ἡμετέρῳ οὐδὲ εἰς ὀλίγον ἐξεργόνει μὴ οὐκ ἀπολωλέναι, μὴ ταχέως αὐτῶ (that is, Γαῖῳ) τελευτῆς παραγενομένης.

rupture with Rome might seem—no such result was yet to be apprehended as a Roman war, until many other things had first come to pass. How useful, how welcome, how consolatory to those for whom it was intended, such an assurance as this must have been, in the time of need, we may conceive from the knowledge of the universal consternation and dismay, under which the rest of the nation laboured, with the anticipation of the same danger, without the same antecedent conviction that in reality there was nothing to fear. This knowledge we obtain from the contemporary narrative of Josephus. Nor is it the least amiable feature in this monument of Divine prescience, exerted in union with Divine benevolence, for the sake of the few faithful and deserving objects of the Divine providence, in the midst of a perverse and crooked generation; that Jesus condescends to relieve his disciples from unnecessary trepidation before the proper time, as much as to guard them against a fatal supineness at the time; and protects them from imaginary terrors and apprehensions, while there was nothing to fear for their safety—as well as from real hazards and dangers, when those were to be encountered. And this, we may add, in the last place, is apparently the reason, why this description of signs is combined with the preceding, and both are stated by themselves, apart from and before the rest; not merely because they might be, and indeed were, the earliest in point of time, but more especially because there was none, among them all, so closely connected in the anticipation, and so nearly identified in the event, with the coming and effect of

the days of vengeance themselves—as these two in particular.

It has been assumed of the object of the third division of the prophecy, Matt. xxiv. 29—31, that it was designed to return an answer to the third question, virtually, if not actually put; what was the sign to precede the *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, or close of the period of ages? whether understood of the end of the world, or of any other event, which admits of being considered a consummation of a preexisting state of things, as well as that. The testimony, indeed, of each of the Evangelists who record this concluding division, concurs to shew, that whatever be the nature of the events which begin now to be predicted, they bear date from a point of time later than the close of the period hitherto under consideration—not only than the interval between the delivery of the prophecy, and the commencement of the days of vengeance, understood synonymously with the national visitation of the Jews, but than the conclusion of those days themselves.

True it is, that with respect to this point of time, St. Matthew connects the beginning of the new series of events with the conclusion of the former, by a particle of time, which, literally construed, would imply that the one should begin to bear date immediately after the end of the other. But this is no necessary inference; for of the two later historians of the same predictions, St. Mark has modified the form of St. Matthew's expression, and St. Luke has omitted both that, or any equivalent expression, entirely; which is sufficient to intimate, that the

language of the former account in this instance, was liable to some misconception, contrary to the proper intent of the prophecy; which it was desirable to obviate in a second or a third account of the same things.

It is, however, to be remembered, that both in the past, and in the present description of the course and circumstances of future events, the language of the Speaker was the language of omniscience, and the ideas of the Speaker were the ideas of omniscience; to whose apprehension the succession of future events, and the comparative interval between one point of time and another, are necessarily very different from what they appear to finite intelligences, like the human mind. It is essential to omniscience, to take in all time, at once; to comprehend the simultaneous prospect of eternity *a parte ante*, and of eternity *a parte post*: as it is essential to omnipresence to fill all space, and to be present at all points of infinitude at once. To such a prospect as this, the greatest of finite intervals, between successive events, must be obliterated; and things the most distant to our apprehensions, must appear to be contiguous and consecutive.

Especially may this conjunction of remote events in the simultaneous prospect of omniscience, be expected to characterize all those revelations of futurity, the proper subject of which is the uninterrupted development, continuation, and fulfilment of the Divine counsels themselves, from their first origination to their final consummation. It is to be observed, accordingly, that this whole period between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of

all things, is one period only—during which one connected action is going forward—the events successively developed are of a kindred nature—and each individual part, in its own time and place, is alike subservient to the end of the whole—the assertion and administration of the kingly office of Jesus Christ; the final end of which, next to the manifestation of his own glory, and the vindication of his own honour, is the protection, preservation, and rewarding of his church, the coercion, the punishment, and the destruction of her enemies and his. This whole period is called sometimes collectively the days of the Son of man, because made up of a series of dispensations in which Jesus Christ, in his mediatorial capacity, that is, in his human, conjoined with his Divine nature, is the principal agent; and sometimes individually his day, because made up of dispensations, which however distinct in themselves, are devoted to a common purpose. Referred to the first of these denominations, a particular portion of the period, with the dispensation, whether of mercy or of judgment, specially appropriated to it, must be called one of these *days* of the Son of man; referred to the latter, one of the *hours* of this *day* of the Son of man; an usage of speech of which the prophecy on the mount itself, as we shall see, supplies an instance.

It was, consequently, far from improbable antecedently, that the present division of a common subject, might begin to relate to things long posterior to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the fulfilment of every thing hitherto predicted, and yet stand in immediate contiguity to what precedes, as the description beforehand of another of the same days of

the Son of man, or as the prosecution of the sequel of the history of the same day, the first part of which was already recorded. Of all the events in the history of the world, subsequent to the proper commencement of the mediatorial reign of Christ, how many, and what, may have served to particular purposes of providence, or judgment, how many, and what, would consequently deserve to be specially called *his day*; it would not be easy to say, where every thing which has happened, either in the moral or in the natural world, from the time that all power was committed to him in heaven and in earth, must be supposed to have happened either of his appointment, or of his permission; and in each case with the wisest and best subserviency to the general purposes of his government: but with respect to his days, understood in the proper forensic sense of the term, that is, those periods, and those dispensations, at which and by which, he reveals himself in his proper judicial capacity for the redress of his servants and for the punishment of his adversaries, according to the different merits of both at his own hands; the three most conspicuous, if not the three only ones of the number, we may venture to say, are the destruction of Jerusalem, as the first; the decision of the great antichristian contest, preparatory to the millennium, as the second; and the general judgment, preliminary to the consummation of all things, and the end of the world, as the last. It is my opinion, that as the part of the prophecy, hitherto considered, relates to the first of this number; so that, on the consideration of which we are about to enter, relates to the second; as we shall

find, perhaps, that a part of the prophecy, at the end of all, relates to the third.

It is very evident, indeed, that whatever obscurity may hang over some of the particulars of this division, others of the number are their own interpreters, and admit only of one construction of their meaning. A personal reappearance of the Son of man, coming upon the clouds of heaven, with much power and glory, is plainly promised by it; which personal reappearance must be upon one of his two advents again, which are all that scripture gives us reason yet to expect; either that which ushers in the millennium, or that which precedes the end of the world. It is as plainly promised that this personal reappearance of Christ himself, shall be followed by the sending forth of his angels, with a trumpet of mighty voice, to gather unto him his elect ones, from the four winds, and from one end of heaven to another; where, from the allusion to the sounding of the trumpet, we may collect perhaps that one of the first effects of the advent of Christ will be the raising of the dead; and consequently either the first resurrection, preparatory to the millennium, or the second, at the end of all things: and, from the description of the effect which follows, the gathering of the elect unto Christ from all quarters of the world, we may infer in like manner, that both the advent and the resurrection, in question, are preliminary to another dispensation, the admission of the good into the enjoyment of their proper reward along with Christ—and consequently either the millenary reward, confined to the good

and faithful among the members of the visible church, at all periods of its existence, or the enjoyment of the reward in heaven, the common privilege of the righteous, among moral agents in general. Between these two opinions, I cannot hesitate to adopt the former—and therefore to conclude that the advent is the advent preparatory to the millennium, the resurrection is the first resurrection, which follows on that advent, and the reward is the privilege of partaking in the blessings of the millenary dispensation; for those whom the angels are destined to bring together, as a consequence of this advent of Christ, and for the enjoyment of their proper reward in conjunction with him, wheresoever found, and whether previously alive or dead, are called his *elect* ones; and the name of the elect is restricted by the usage of scripture to the true members of the visible church, the people of God, strictly so called; and above all, to faithful believers in Jesus Christ. Nor are the subjects of this gathering together, to whatsoever it may be preliminary, described to be any but the elect. Consequently in the dispensation, whatever it may be, ensuing upon it, none are properly concerned, but they; a description of consequences which may hold good of every thing preparatory to such a dispensation as the millennium, in which a part only of moral agents are directly interested, but not preparatory to such an œconomy of retribution as the general judgment, in which the complex of responsible beings are concerned alike.

There have been in fact commentators on the prophecy, who, concluding the substance of this last division to have a special reference to the events

which must precede and usher in the end of the world, have thought that the whole of the two preceding divisions was purposely intended to prepare the way for this; that the national visitation of the Jews was not only a type of those events, but by the speedy accomplishment of its own class of predictions, was expressly designed to give credibility beforehand to these more distant, but still kindred prophecies. But, though the exact fulfilment of one part of the same series of predictions in its proper order, naturally tends to confirm the belief of the fulfilment of the rest in due season; yet to maintain that the first half of this illustrious prophecy, had no other object, except to prepare the way for the second, would be liable to great objections. Strictly speaking nothing would be necessary, at least in the estimation of the hearers of the prophecy, to inspire the fullest confidence in the futurity of the things predicted by it, beyond the simple fact that our Saviour had predicted them. The consideration of the two preceding divisions has shewn that they possess an use and purpose of their own, to which they are carefully accommodated; and that too an use and purpose, entirely worthy of the communications. And in fact, did we compare the fulness of the former with the conciseness of the latter, merely, we should be tempted to say this last was an appendix added to them, rather than that they were an introduction premised to it. But the truth is, they are each independent of the other, and only connected together in the prosecution of a common subject, which both in the original inquiry, and in the matter of fact, naturally distributed itself into two heads, the appearing of the Son of Man in his day,

to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the appearing of the Son of man in the same kind of day, to any analogous dispensation—whether the decision of the great antichristian contest, and the close of the period of ages in that sense, or the general judgment, and the consummation of all things.

How enlarged the comprehensiveness of the whole scheme of futurity, thus delineated, becomes upon this supposition, how wonderfully ennobled our conceptions of the Divine prescience of its author; it is scarcely necessary for me to remind the reader. With this reference, however, to events still in futurity, and consequently more or less wrapt up in mystery, it cannot of course be expected that we should endeavour to anticipate, in our explanations of this member of the prophecy, those partiicular disclosures which time only can bring to light. To do justice in fact to this section of the prophecy upon the mount, would require us to enter upon the comparison of it with much of the Book of Revelation; of which I apprehend this portion of the prophecy would be found a kind of epitome, embracing the same outline of events, and the same period of time in general, without descending like that book, into particulars; a comparison which would be obviously out of our power at present. The sort of consideration which only we can be properly expected to give to this remaining division of the subject, is such as arises naturally from its connection with the part before it, and treats it as an integral member of one whole; with which view, I observe, that as its subject-matter in general is akin to that of the two former divisions, so is the plan and distribution of

its contents analogous to the order which has been seen to pervade theirs.

For example, events were specified in the former instance, to mark out and presignify the approach of the end ; and events are specified in this instance, also, which are obviously intended to serve the same purpose of signs of something else. Those signs before were of two kinds in general ; and so they appear to be in this instance also : some of the events here specified are remote or distant harbingers of the coming result of all—and one in particular seems to declare it to be at hand ; serving the same purpose, as a sign, in this instance, as that particular event which ushered in the appearing, or *παρουσία*, did before. There is apparently too, an interval of some kind between the manifestation of this sign, and the consummation which it ushers in, as there was before, between the sign of the appearing, and the appearing itself. Lastly, there is here also an appearing and presence, an advent and manifestation of Jesus Christ, to consummate the whole series of prognostics and harbingers of its approach, as there was before ; with this difference only, that whereas that appearing was typical before, it is literal now ; whereas it was virtual, or *ἐν δυνάμει* before, it is actual, and in person now.

Combining together the accounts of the three Evangelists, we may collect that the events which are destined to answer the purpose of signs of the first description, will be in general twofold ; those which will be manifested in the heaven, and those which will be manifested on the earth ; but that each of them will be subservient to a third, of which they are symptomatic and declaratory. The events of

the first of these classes, whose locality is the heaven, are the particular afflictions predicted to ensue of the sun, the moon, and the stars; those of the second, whose locality is the earth, are the “constant holding
 “ of nations in perplexity, *the* sea and *the* tossing
 “ *thereof*’ roaring—men’s swooning (or being ready
 “ to die away) from fear and expectation of the things
 “ which are coming upon the world;” in other words, the disturbance and convulsion of the elements of external nature, and a certain fearful misgiving of the future, painful to feel, founded on the ominous aspect, and dismal forebodings of the times; if indeed the effect of both these causes is not reducible to the single particular first specified, the constant holding of nations in perplexity, (συνεχῆ ἔθνῶν ἐν ἀπορίᾳ,) which is so well calculated to express it of each. The third event, of which the two former classes of signs collectively must be considered themselves the prognostics, as directly as this event is of something beyond itself—is the fact which is meant by the shaking of the powers of the heavens. All these things, just before enumerated, whatsoever is to be their locality, whether in the air or on the earth, we are expressly assured by St. Luke, would come to pass and be witnessed, beforehand, “because the powers of the
 “ heavens should be shaken,” as the event of all.

With regard to the precise import of these expressions, or what is to be understood by these various images, there can be only two opinions; either that they are meant for literal descriptions of future literal facts, in conformity to their apparent meaning, or that they are intended in some figurative sense, and are to be construed and interpreted

accordingly. Between these opinions, I should not hesitate to prefer the former, as much the more probable of the two, on many accounts. For, first, the preceding review of the prophecy, up to this point of time, has shewn that it contains not a single allusion to any one circumstance of futurity, which was not to be literally construed, and literally fulfilled. It is a peculiar characteristic of the prophecy on the mount, that the Speaker who makes these copious disclosures of the future, relates them with all the calmness, the minuteness, the simplicity and perspicuity of a well-informed historian, giving a circumstantial account of the past, rather than a prospective summary of the future: and it would be entirely inconsistent with the unity of this character, that two thirds of the prophecy should contain nothing but plain, literal truth, and the remaining third, nothing but allegory and figure. Again, the narrative of St. Luke, if not the account of St. Matthew and St. Mark, by discriminating between the phenomena which should be visible in the heavens, and the signs which should be perceptible on the earth, clearly intimates that the former must have an use and meaning confined to their proper locality, as much as the latter; and in particular that neither, in their own locality, can be simply symbolical of any thing confined to the locality of the other. The terms, too, in which St. Luke more especially speaks of the signs of either class, seem incapable of any thing but a literal acceptation. For we observe that he has qualified the language of the prediction in St. Matthew and St. Mark, with respect to the foreshewn affections of the heavenly bodies, to the simple, though equivalent assertion of signs or phenomena generally, to be seen in the sun,

the moon, and the stars ; from which I think it is a necessary inference, that the sun, the moon, and the stars themselves, and not something else of which they are but symbols, are destined to be the subjects of those affections. With respect to the signs, whose locality is to be the earth, too, he has distinguished the continuance of nations in distress, and the fearful misgivings of men's hearts, from the roaring of the winds and waves, while he classes them together as signs of a common import. Now the two first of these particulars, it is impossible to understand except as literal future matters of fact ; and if the two first of this class are thus seen to be literal events, the third of the number must be as literal as the other two ; for what consistency would there be in joining together two literal descriptions of one kind, with a symbolical description of another kind, as equally members of the same class of events ? Again, it is distinctly affirmed by St. Luke, and it is implied by St. Matthew and St. Mark, as I have already observed, that the true reason why these things should previously be seen to come to pass ; why signs of a peculiar kind should be visible in the heavenly luminaries, and fearful expectations should prevail upon earth—is because the powers of the heavens should be shaken. In the mention of this particular, the Evangelists are unanimous—which is sufficient to prove that it could not be the least important of all ; and they agree too in placing it at the close, and after the enumeration of the rest, as last in the order of succession—as not destined to happen, until those had preceded ; and evidently with good reason, if, as we learn from St. Luke, this one was to be in fact the

sum and substance of the rest. Now, if such is destined to be the connection between these things, what figurative meaning can be put upon the prediction of those things which are to serve as the antecedents, while a literal meaning requires to be attached to that which describes the consequent? What symbolical sense can be couched under the supposed affections of the heavenly luminaries, or the allusion to the roaring of the winds and waves, while the shaking of the powers of heaven, of which they are both symptomatic, is literally to be understood?

The powers of heaven, if figuratively understood, must be an image employed to describe the kingdoms, governments, or rulers, ecclesiastical or civil, upon earth: in which sense, the phrase would be destitute of all support from the reason of the thing, the usage of scripture, and the analogy of prophetic utterance in its boldest conceptions, and its darkest expressionsⁿ. We may venture to say, that no kingdoms, or bodies politic on earth, nor their heads or governors, are ever described in the style of prophecy, by the name of "the powers of the heavens." But if the phrase is to be literally understood, then, by the powers of the heavens must be meant one or other of the two orders of created intelligences in general, the good and the evil angels, both of them equally subordinate to the Supreme Intelligence, the Lord of Hosts, and both of them in one sense the powers of heaven. It is most reasonable, however, to understand it of the last of these orders in particular; because the shaking, agitation, or concussion, of which the powers in question are to be the subjects, implies a

ⁿ Not excepting even Dan. viii. 20.

liability to external violence, from some cause or other, and a risk of disturbance in the possession of their antecedent place of abode, which cannot be supposed of the good angels, but may be of the evil angels; whose local habitation, during the continuance of that toleration and immunity, which the Almighty is pleased to allow them at present, we have the assurance of scripture, is actually the region of the lower heavens, or upper air^o; an habitation, which they hold only by permission or sufferance of the God of heaven, and from which they may sometime be ejected^p. The concussion of the

^o Ephes. ii. 2; vi. 12: Cf. Luke x. 18. (viii. 31.) John xii. 31: xiv. 30; xvi. 11: 1 Cor. ii. 6. 8; viii. 5: 2 Cor. iv. 4: Rom. viii. 38: Ephes. i. 10. 21; iii. 10. 15: Coloss. i. 13. 16; ii. 10. 15: (Cf. 1 Tim. v. 21.): 1 Pet. iii. 22: 2 Pet. ii. 11.

^p I consider it no objection to the above interpretation of this part of the prophecy, that images and descriptions, analogous to those which are here specified, implying in their first and most obvious acceptation such and such affections of the heavenly bodies, occur in various parts of the Old Testament; as Isaiah xiii. 10. 13; xxiv. 23; xxxiv. 4; xxx. 26; i. 3; li. 6: Ezekiel xxxii. 7, 8: and Joel ii. 10. 31; iii. 15: Amos viii. 9: for all these predictions may refer to one and the same future fact, and all be literally fulfilled in due time alike.

Neither is it any objection, that of these, Joel ii. 31. is quoted along with the rest of the same chapter, from verse 28 to the end, by St. Peter, in his address to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 17—21. as what had been fulfilled, in some sense or other, by the miraculous dispensation of that day. The same prophecy of scripture may have an equal fulfilment in a succession of analogous events; and to the anticipation of the future so conveyed, the first step in the fulfilment of a given effect, may be considered and spoken of as tantamount to the last. Great and notable as that day of the Lord might be, which was signalised by the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the commencement of the Christian dispensation; there is another, equally great and notable, or rather much more so, still to come,

powers of darkness in this their capital seat, must imply a sensible diminution or contraction of their power, their range, and their activity, preparatory to their total coercion. Perhaps, the time of the fulfilment of this prediction is intimated, Revel. xii. 7—9. 4^q. To judge from the intimations of scripture, the decision of the great antichristian contest

which shall witness the decision of the antichristian contest, and the consummation of every thing of which the dispensation of the day of Pentecost, was but the beginning.

The imagery which scripture commonly employs, when speaking of evil spirits under terms and denominations borrowed from external nature, is derived from the heavenly luminaries ; either because the earliest species of idolatry was the zabæan, or worship of the host of heaven, (whence in the symbolical language of hieroglyphic—a star stands for a God) ; or because there was a natural aptness in the stars, and other heavenly bodies, whose locality is the firmament, whose brightness is so dazzling to the eye of sense, to represent metaphorically the various created beings, of so godlike and exalted a nature, whose proper habitation also is heaven. Isaiah xiv. 12, 13 : the prince of the fallen angels is personified as Lucifer, son of the morning : his followers generally, Isaiah xxxiv. 4 : Daniel viii. 20. as the host of heaven ; or as the stars, in general. Our Saviour adopts the same imagery, Luke x. 18 : and the book of Revelation, repeatedly, as vi. 13 ; viii. 10, 11 ; viii. 12 ; ix. 1 ; xii. 4 : and always, as it appears to me, in the same symbolical sense. Cf. Job xxxviii. 7 : Isaiah xlv. 12 : Ezek. xxviii : Dan. viii. 10, 11, 12 ; x. 13, 20, 21 ; xii. 1. A star stands as the symbol of a god, too, generally, Numbers xxiv. 17 : Amos v. 25, 26. Cf. Acts vii. 43. Affections of the heavenly bodies, then, so different from common, and yet visible to the eye of sense, like these which the prophecy describes in the present instance, when specified as the presages of such and such consequents, I should always understand to be symptomatic of some approaching dispensation, by which the power, the agency, the empire and ascendancy of evil spirits, more than any thing else, are destined to be directly affected.

^q Cf. vi. 12, 13.

may be expected to be preceded by a general defection or apostasy from Christianity, a persecution of the remnant of the true church, and a firmer and more general establishment of the strongholds of spiritual wickedness in the parts of heaven, for a time, than ever; and by parity of consequence, when the event of that decision is approaching, the arrival of the period of their coercion and punishment, to such a degree as we have reason to expect for the duration of the millennium, may be preceded by such signs and symptoms, as to imply that the powers of the heavens are in danger; that the time of their ascendancy is drawing to an end; that their empire is already shaken to its centre, and ere long must be completely overthrown.

With regard to that one sign belonging to the second class, above enumerated, which was said to correspond, in this instance, to the sign of the appearing, in the former; it is briefly, but emphatically denominated the sign of the Son of man, and nothing more. Yet this denomination is perhaps sufficient to intimate the use and intent of the sign, so called; viz. to denote the near approach of some event, like one of those dispensations, styled the *days* of the Son of man, in which our Lord himself, in his proper human capacity, is the sole or the principal agent; and therefore the near approach of the period of his personal manifestation. Such is that dispensation in particular, which ushers in the millennium—the decision of the great antichristian contest, preceded as it must be, by the general apostasy from the faith of Jesus Christ.

That the appearance of this portentous sign, will

be known and understood at the time to have a special reference to him, whose sign it is called, may be collected from what it is said shall be the direct effect of its manifestation, “And then shall all the kindreds of the earth bewail themselves;” a passage of the prophecy on the mount, which seems to be repeated *in terminis*, Rev. i. 7; where too, in conjunction with it, is combined in like manner the prediction of the personal return and manifestation of Jesus Christ. This general lamentation of all the kindreds, or families of the earth, cannot be so well explained upon any supposition, as that of its being the effect of a general consternation, founded on the expectation of some great and alarming event, in which all are to be concerned alike; and which nothing is so likely to occasion, as the inference collected from the signs of the times, that a day of retribution upon human wickedness, then probably at its height—and of resentment for all the injuries and dishonour heaped upon God, and his holy religion, is at hand. The characteristic circumstances of the appearance of this sign, such as are specified, agree to this presumption of its meaning; first, in its being visible in the heavens, a locality where it must be conspicuous and perceptible to all; and secondly, in being the cause of a general alarm and lamentation, implying not only that it must be seen by all, but that its import, whatever it be, must be equally intelligible to the construction of all, and equally terrible to the apprehension of all. As to the true nature of the sign itself, the prophecy specifies it no further than by its relation to the Son of man, which gives it its name, and whence we may infer that it must be something eminently cha-

racteristic of him. On this account, it would be obvious to conclude, that it cannot be the Shechinah, or that luminous appearance which seems on every occasion of the manifestation of the Deity to the eye of sense, to have been the visible symbol of his presence; both because the Shechinah would be the characteristic sign of the Godhead, as such, and not of the Son of man; and because the Shechinah is spoken of afterwards, as we may presume, under the name of the glory, which, along with the demonstrations of power and majesty, is supposed to attend the actual appearing and presence, posterior to the manifestation of the sign, of the Son of man. It was the opinion of the commentators of antiquity on this part of the prophecy, that the sign of the Son of man, thus alluded to, was the *cross*; and certainly, as the sign of the Son of man, none could possess a more characteristic relation to him in that respect, nor be more deserving of the name of *his* sign in particular, who died upon the cross for the salvation of mankind ^a.

^a Theophylact. i. 132. D. in Matt. xxv: ὁ σταυρὸς τότε ὑφῆθησεται ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὑπὲρ τὸν ἥλιον λάμπων, πρὸς ἔλεγχον τῶν Ἰουδαίων. Cf. Chrysostom, Opera ii. Homilia 76. *Savillii*: from whom Theophylact doubtless took this gloss upon the text.

At the end of the sixth book of the Sibylline Oracles also, is an allusion to the appearance of the cross at some future time in heaven; which may be understood of the expected manifestation of the sign of the Son of man, in that form.

ὁ ξύλον, ὃ μακαριστὸν, ἐφ' ᾧ Θεὸς ἐξετανύσθη·
οὐχ ἔξει σε χθῶν, ἀλλ' οὐρανὸν οἶκον ἐσόψει,
ἥνικα ἀστράψῃ τὸ νέον Θεοῦ ἔμπυρον ὄμμα.

In the second of which lines we should perhaps read,

ἀλλ' οὐρανοῦ οἶκον ἐσόψει,

And in the third,

ἥνικ' ἂν ἀστράψῃ τὸ νέον Θεοῦ ἔμπυρον ὄμμα.

We have now gone through as much of the discourse as returns a direct answer to each of the

In the works of Cyrill, bishop of Jerusalem, page 305, is a letter, addressed to the emperor Constantius, which gives an account of a luminous appearance in the form of a cross, seen in the heavens on the nones of May, Whitsunday or Pentecost in that year, at the third hour of the day; extending from Golgotha or Calvary to the mount of Olives, and continuing to be visible for several hours. The same fact is mentioned in the ecclesiastical historians of the period. See my Supplem. Diss. p. 542, 543.

Some commentators on the prophecy have thought that this prediction of the appearance of the sign of the Son of man in the heavens, was fulfilled by the vision of the cross, which appeared to Constantine and all his army, and is recorded by Eusebius, as he had the account of it from the emperor himself, in the following passage of the *Life of Constantine*, i. 28. 422. Β: ἀμφὶ μεσημβρινὰς ἡλίου ὥρας, ἤδη τῆς ἡμέρας ἀποκλινοῦσης, αὐτοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν ἔφη ἐν αὐτῷ οὐρανῷ ὑπερκείμενον τοῦ ἡλίου σταυροῦ τρόπαιον, ἐκ φωτὸς συνιστάμενον, γραφὴν τε αὐτῷ συνῆφθαι, λέγουσαν, Τούτῳ νίκα. Then follows, capp. 30, 31. 422, 423, the description of the Labarum, or sacred standard, constructed after the model of this vision, and ever after used by Constantine. I do not subscribe to this opinion, though I think it but right to mention it.

St. Luke's account of this division of the prophecy, is closed by a verse, peculiar to his relation of it; xxi. 20: "And when these things are beginning to come to pass, stoop upwards, and lift up your heads (*ἀνακύψατε, καὶ ἐπάρατε τὰς κεφαλὰς ὑμῶν*); for that your redemption is drawing nigh." The allusions in this verse are obviously borrowed from the idea of bodies prostrate on the ground, and of heads bowed down to the dust; which is the natural attitude of grief and suffering, the expression of corporeal or mental dejection and distress. In this state the persons addressed are supposed previously to be, when the first fulfilment of the signs just before promised and described, is held out to them as a ground of encouragement, as a motive to hope and confidence, upon the strength of the assurance thereby conveyed that their redemption is drawing nigh. Among the

three inquiries, which we supposed to have been originally put; and though a great deal more still remains, which was said on the same occasion, there is this degree of subserviency in it to what has preceded, that it rises mainly out of the former part, and is specially intended to give force and effect to the final end designed by it. Even in what has preceded, the prophetic part, minute and copious as it was, has been seen to be subordinate to the preceptive, combined with it; but in what remains, the historical is almost entirely merged in the practical department of the subject—and while there is much less of prophecy, there is still more of personal instruction and admonition to be yet considered. The present, then, is a convenient place to pause for a while, and to take a retrospect of the prophecy, so far as it has been examined, with a view to illustrate its general character, or the special propriety of the circumstances under which it was delivered—the time, the occasion, and the place.

First, then, it must be admitted as an obvious inference from the above review, that the prophecy on

events which are yet to be expected, before that change of things, moral and physical, which the millenarian anticipates from the millenary dispensation, one is, the last and most severe of the persecutions of the church militant—that which it is destined to undergo during the ascendancy of Antichrist. Vide vol. i. of this work, p. 479—485. To the state of the church, during this period, I would refer the first part of Luke xxi. 28. which is so apposite to the description of a suffering church; and to the hope and confidence inspired by the prospect of its final deliverance, as shewn to be drawing nigh, by the fulfilment of the signs long before predicted to precede the decision of the antichristian contest—I would refer the latter part of the same verse, which is not less apposite to that construction.

the mount exhibits none of that confusion and perplexity in its structure, which some of the commentators upon it appear to have discovered in it. On the contrary, the order and distribution of its parts is the most natural and perspicuous imaginable. Notwithstanding the union of two distinct topics in the tissue of the same discourse, the prophetic and the preceptive—one leading idea pervades the whole, and blends both its parts in one; an idea, altogether worthy both of the goodness and the justice of God, and calculated to place the benevolent regard and affection of the Speaker, in behalf of his faithful disciples, in the most amiable and impressive point of view; the immediate safety and the final preservation of the Hebrew Christians, in the midst of all the calamities which were destined to befall their unbelieving countrymen. Both members of the discourse work together for the attainment of this one purpose. The particular description of the course of futurity, the special directions for the conduct of the disciples before and after a certain time, what they were not to do, as well as what they were to do, each so largely supplied by its own part of the discourse, leave nothing to be desired for the most effectual subserviency of prophetic light to practical admonition, or *vice versa*; and so connected in its component parts, the resulting discourse possesses all the integrity essential to a whole, and all the clearness which is the consequence of order and methodical arrangement.

The time selected for the delivery of these predictions, peculiar as they are in the subjects upon which they turn, and copious and minute as they

are in their details, was singularly appropriate. This period was the close of our Saviour's public ministry, just before the event of his suffering, and not long anterior to his final separation from his disciples, in person. If we regard them as prophetic of the impending dissolution of the Jewish church and state, considered in the light of the national punishment upon the national guilt, contracted by the failure of our Lord's ministry, perhaps we shall conclude they could not have been delivered at any period of his ministry, with more fitness than at this. The national sin of the Jews was now complete. A long series of overt acts and declarations of impenitence and infidelity, had placed beyond a question the fact of their rejection of the Messiah, notwithstanding the evidence of the fulfilment of prophecy, the testimony of John the Baptist, the preaching of our Lord himself, and the glory of his miracles, all conspiring to establish the truth of his character: or if the same fact required any further proof, it was shortly about to receive it in the crucifixion of the Master, and the systematic hatred and persecution of his followers. With reason then did the denunciation of the punishment, coincide with the time of the consummation of the guilt. It was, perhaps, only consistent with probability beforehand, that some such solemn prediction of the consequences of persisting in their infidelity to the last, should be recorded against them from the mouth of our Saviour himself, while still upon earth, as the person whose honour was most sensibly affected by that infidelity; and if so, the close of his public ministry, as being the close of the period of trial during which the Jews were put to the test whether they would finally accept or

finally reject him, in quality of the Messiah whom the nation expected, was obviously the best adapted for that purpose. It is worthy to be remarked likewise, that this recorded description of the future national calamities, the appointed punishment of the national guilt already contracted—descending as it does so minutely into particulars, followed with but little delay on the most open and animated invective, ever delivered by our Lord, against the public and private vices of that sect among the Jews, to whose opposition, and whose influence with the people, the failure of his mission, and the fact of their infidelity, was mainly due: and it may be regarded as no more than a continuation in private of a discourse recently begun in public—as an explanation, confidentially vouchsafed to believers and disciples, of judgments to come, darkly and summarily denounced against infidels and enemies.

If we regard these disclosures, on the other hand, as equally intended for the sake of our Lord's own disciples, the period selected for their delivery will appear not less suitable. As a means of assuring the Hebrew Christians beforehand of his constant care and providence in their behalf; they would be most necessary when he was about to be personally separated from them: as a recorded monument in attestation of his continued solicitude for their welfare, whether present or absent; they would be most acceptable, most gratefully received and most duly cherished, when commended to their keeping as it were with his last breath: as a constant source of comfort under distress, as a standing provision to direct their judgment, and to regulate their conduct during a singularly dangerous and critical period;

as a precaution to allay the apprehension of distant evil, and to excite the fear, and to facilitate the escape, of instant danger; they would be most requisite when the hour of suffering was arrived, and most effectual when the moment of jeopardy was at hand.

The occasion, too, which more immediately produced these disclosures, whatever further end might be contemplated by them, possesses something peculiarly impressive. The prophecy was delivered in answer to an inquiry of the apostles; but this question arose apparently out of the prediction relating to the fate of the temple: and that prediction was called forth by a very natural, but seemingly a casual burst of feeling—which is most probably to be accounted for on the principle of the enthusiasm which kindles spontaneously in every patriotic breast, when reflecting upon, or contemplating before the eyes, whatsoever constitutes the ornament and glory, the pride and boast of its own country. And what could be more so, in the estimation of a native Jew, than the possession of a temple not merely the chosen habitation of the one true God, but by the grandeur of its external majesty, if any thing of human construction could be worthy of such an inhabitant, not unmeet for the Lord of heaven and earth? a temple, which for the magnificence of its structure, the costliness and beauty of its materials, as well as for the purity of its worship and the sacredness of its character, was without a rival in the ancient world. Yet when the sense of honest pride and patriotic exultation, in the possession of so distinguished an ornament of his age and nation,

was at its height in the mind of this one disciple, whose apostrophe to our Lord, excited by the contemplation and the admiration of its buildings, as they were passing through its courts, is so singularly contrasted with the melancholy import of his answer—this was the moment chosen to inculcate upon him, and the rest of the hearers, the mournful truth of its future ruin and desolation. There is a moral pathos in this coincidence, derived not only from the consideration of the calamity itself, thus forcibly brought to view, but from the reflection which it naturally excites upon the causes to which that effect should be due; not merely the fleeting and transitory quality of all human works, but moreover, the efficacy of human sin and human guilt to abase and annihilate the proudest and most durable monuments of human power and human grandeur: how much more speedy and irresistible than time, or any other agent of destruction, the wickedness of men themselves should be, to deface and obliterate the fairest and noblest of their own creations. Regarded in this point of view, there are but two examples besides of the same impressive contrast, which would deserve to be compared with this—each supplied by the history of the Old Testament; the first, the occasion chosen for denouncing to Solomon the future destruction of the first temple^b; and the second, the moment selected for communicating to Hezekiah the assurance of the captivity, awaiting his family and his people, from the kings of Babylon^c.

^b 1 Kings vi. 12, 13; ix. 2—9; 2 Chron. vii. 19—22.

^c 2 King xx. 12—19; Isaiah xxxix. 1—8.

The peculiarity of the place, too, on which this prophecy was delivered, is as remarkable as any other. It was a singular coincidence, that disclosures of the future, embracing so many minute, local allusions, and drawing so lively a picture of national and individual suffering, were made on the spot which was destined to be the scene of their accomplishment, and in the presence of the very objects whose fate was so deeply concerned in the event. The time would come, when mount Olivet, on which the Speaker was sitting, would be covered not only with the ministers, but with the monuments of the predicted vengeance; when the entire vicinity of Jerusalem would be so filled with the spectacle of suffering, that, as Josephus tells us was the case, crosses should be wanted for bodies, and room for crosses^d.

We may easily conceive what additional light would be reflected upon the anticipation of the future, by the coincidence in question; how much the liveliness of description, the earnestness of persuasion, the impressiveness of pathetic circumstances, would be increased by the immediate neighbourhood of the objects themselves. We might specify many passages in the above account, which the local situation of the Speaker, and of the parties addressed, would at once illustrate and apply; where the allu-

^d The first instance of the crucifixion of a Jew, by Titus, occurred a few days after his arrival before the city, in the month Xanthicus, U. C. 823: the sufferer being a single Jew, made prisoner in a sally of the besieged, the cross being erected in front of the city: Jos. B. v. vi. 5. Afterwards, we are told, as many as five hundred at a time were crucified by the Roman soldiers daily, ἄλλος ἄλλω σχήματι πρὸς χλεῦην, until at last, διὰ τὸ πλῆθος, χώρα τε ἐνελείπετο τοῖς σταυροῖς, καὶ σταυροὶ τοῖς σώμασιν: B. v. xi. 1.

sion to things about him and them was too pointed to be overlooked; in which the sentiments or language of the discourse might have been suggested by the circumjacent picture; into which the very attitudes and gestures of the Speaker, a turn of the body, a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, might have thrown a living force and expression. We have but to place ourselves in imagination upon the mount, along with our Lord and his four disciples, to comprehend in some slight degree, how great was the contrast between that picture of the future, which he was revealing to their prospect, and the scene which in all probability was present to their eyes at the time. Jerusalem lay before them, with the temple mount at its northern extremity, the most conspicuous among the buildings of the city; the former, with its crowded streets and sumptuous palaces, constructed almost totally on rising ground; the latter, with its marble porches and squares, towering gradually one above another; appearing at a distance like piles of snow, and enclosing in the centre, and as the crown of all, the sanctuary itself—overlaid with shining gold, and covered at the top with glistening balls and polished spikes of the same metal. It was probably evening when Jesus took his leave of the temple; and as he sat on the mount, as we are told, over against it subsequently, delivering this discourse to his disciples, it was very possible under the cloudless sky of Judæa, and it would add to the melancholy interest and solemnity of the rest of the scene, was it the case—that the last beams of the setting sun, in the west, were lighting up the precincts of the city and of the temple, with a momentary splendour, when

Jesus was foretelling the total eclipse of their pomp, their sanctity, their greatness, soon to ensue. From the place where he was sitting, the whole land of Judæa, the country of the hills, to both which distinct allusions were made, might each be seen. The very spot where the abomination of desolation was first to be erected; the quarter whence the danger should first approach; the point to which escape must be directed; all might be marked out beforehand, on that locality. Nor could the present appearance of things about them, compared with the prospect of what was to come, fail to affect the hearers with the liveliest emotions both of surprise and grief. They could not doubt the reality of that change some time or other, which their Master had so solemnly predicted; but they might well be at a loss to conceive by what combination of natural causes it should be brought to pass, or on what principles of human probability it was to be accounted for. The idea of a great, a populous, and flourishing city, at the present instant buried in profound tranquillity—intent only on the customary arts and occupations of peaceable and settled times—and at this moment busied with the preparations of a splendid and joyous festivity, like the passover of the nation—suddenly involved in its own ashes; given up to carnage and destruction; desolated of inhabitants, and abandoned for ever to a dreary solitude, or to the possession of its most implacable enemies, could not but produce in any spectator a strong effect on the feelings of a common humanity. But how would that effect be increased, where the suffering city was destined to be Jerusalem, and the spectators of its anticipated downfall and destruction were themselves Jews!

If we proceed to the sequel of the discourse, from the 32d verse of the xxivth of St. Matthew, the first question which presents itself is about the distribution of its component parts ; the second, about the use and design of those parts respectively. Now, in reference to the first of these questions, an attentive examination of the remainder of the discourse will satisfy an inquirer, that this too admits of being distributed, like the former part, into three general divisions, each of them arising in its turn out of the corresponding portion of the first half of the discourse which returned the proper answer to one of the three questions originally put ; a discovery, which, if true, furnishes a remarkable proof of the singular harmony of structure which pervades the whole of the prophecy on the mount, and upon which we made the necessary observations not long since. Of these divisions of the sequel of the discourse, the first extends from verse 32—35, the second, from verse 36—44, both of the xxivth of St. Matthew ; the third, from verse 45 of the xxivth to the end of the xxvth.

That the two first of these divisions are to be referred in general to the subject of the predicted destruction of Jerusalem, may be safely concluded ; the former, because by the 34th verse, which is an integral part of that division, the period of time to which it is limited, is distinctly comprehended within the natural lifetime of the then existing generation ; with which restriction, it is impossible to conclude that the subject-matter of the predictions supposed to be fulfilled within the same period of time, can be any thing but the events destined to precede or to accompany the dissolution of the Jewish state

and nation: the latter, because in the 37th verse it resumes the topic of the appearing and presence of the Son of man, and so refers us at once to the subject of the second question; and because there is a literal agreement both in the expressions and sentiments of this part, with those of St. Luke, in the parallel passage of his xviith chapter, which we shewed to relate to the first appearing in question—that is, the period of the advent of Christ to the national visitation of the Jews. With respect to the third and most comprehensive division of all, the circumstance that the two preceding divisions are specially restricted to the two first of the original questions, would itself be presumptively an argument that the third and remaining division must have the same special reference to the third and remaining topic of inquiry. Some of its parts, indeed, admit of no other reference than to the subject of the consummation of all things, in one or other of the two senses of the phrase, pointed out above; and between these and the rest there is so much connection and dependency, that what is true of the relation of one of them, may be assumed to be true of that of the rest. The particular exposition of each of these members in its turn, will place the fact of this, their common relation, beyond a question; though for obvious reasons that particular exposition cannot be entered upon at present.

With regard to the next subject of inquiry, the use and design of each of these parts respectively, all possessing a certain general relation in common to what had preceded; it should be remembered that the first question originally proposed was this, When

these things shall be? to which it must appear from the above review, that the answer returned did not directly satisfy the object of the inquiry, by stating in plain terms the time of the end, but indirectly, by specifying certain marks and criterions in general—by means of which, if not the precise period of the event itself, yet the several stages of its approach, might be judged of and foreknown. The intention of the recurrence to this topic, at the present point in the order of the discourse, is to assure the hearers of the infallibility of these signs, as made known beforehand with this special purpose in view; so that, though not the event itself, though only its harbingers and precursors—the fact of their fulfilment might be considered a pledge and an earnest of the fulfilment of what they portended also, in its due season. The grounds upon which the assurance of this infallibility is rested are twofold: the first a natural aptitude in the things, to possess this peculiar significancy as signs; the second, the veracity of our Lord himself. Each of these will require to be distinctly considered.

To convey the idea of the aptitude in question, and at the same time to illustrate it, our Saviour made use of a very beautiful simile, taken, according to his usual manner, from external nature, and such objects of that description as were present about him and his disciples at the time; which, as something that made a deep impression on the hearers, each of the historians of the discourse has been careful to record. The first symptoms of vegetation in the herbs or the trees, are a natural omen of the plenty and maturity, to follow in their season; the buds and flowers are the harbingers of the leaves

and the fruits ; the promise of the spring is the prognostic of the abundance of the autumn. As certainly then, as from the first green sprouts, the first leaves and shoots of the fig-tree, and the rest of the trees, they might conclude the spring to be begun, and the summer to be nigh at hand ; so, from the first accomplishment of any of those events, predicted as signs, might they infer the period of the great result, in which they were all to end, to be coming on. Nor should they see one only of these predictions beginning to be fulfilled, before their eyes, to lead to this presumption of the gradual approach of the event of all—but each in its turn ; for it is further added, that the generation then in being should not be passed away, until *all* those things (both the signs, beforehand, and by parity of reason, the thing signified, last of all) were come to pass.

The second of the grounds of the infallibility in question, is alleged in the words which follow ; “ The heaven and the earth shall pass away ; but “ my words shall not pass away : ” the obvious meaning of which is, that what Jesus Christ himself had expressly foretold, on that account alone, might surely be expected to come to pass. What need, then, it may be asked, of any other argument but the deference due to his authority, to confirm the disciples in the belief of his predictions ? None at all, we may reply ; if the purpose for which his word was pledged in this instance, was to confirm the hearers in the confident expectation of the event presignified, and not, as I apprehend was really the case, in the certain assurance of the fulfilment simply of all those facts which had been foretold to

precede it as signs. A different principle of credibility, in the reason of things, must be necessary to enforce the belief of the expectation of events destined to serve the purpose of signs, from that which must justify the expectation of the thing signified by them. The former might be placed, if need were, on the simple authority of the Speaker, who made them known beforehand ; the latter must be resolvable into the common principle of the relation between the sign and the thing signified ; the power essential to every sign to explain itself, and to convey the knowledge of something beyond itself, without which it could not serve for the purpose of a sign. This necessary fitness of all the events, predicted to precede the end, which qualified them to serve as the prognostics of it, and by virtue of their own significancy at the time, to be infallible tokens of the event of all at last—was derived from that common property of their nature, on which we insisted in its place ; that of being judicial and penal in their character ; all, specimens of national visitations for national sins, (though on a smaller scale,) as much as the great penal dispensation of which they were the presages and foretastes. And thus much, indeed, appears to be intimated of this community of nature in the sign and the thing signified, by the simile which illustrates their connection. The spring is a part of the year, as well as the beginning of it ; the buds and the flowers are not only the forerunners, but the actual first developement, of the seeds and the fruits.

With respect to the use and design of the second division, the subject-matter of this division is the

particular uncertainty of the time of the event, contrasted with the general certainty of the fact of it; between which consequently, and the last topic, there must be the closest connection. For the true reason why the direct inquiry of the apostles concerning the time of the end, could not be as directly answered, was the impossibility of making it directly known, entailed by this uncertainty; an impossibility so great, that no created intelligence, however superior to the human, nor even the Son himself, at the time when these disclosures were made, in his human capacity, was able to remove it, or to make the discovery in question ^c. The utmost then, which could

^c Those words in St. Mark's Gospel, xiii. 32, *οὐδὲ ὁ υἱὸς*, which assert the same ignorance of the day and hour in question, of the Son, as of the angels in heaven, and therefore seem to put limits or bounds to his knowledge, as much as to theirs, admit of an easy explanation, without calling in question the genuineness of the reading in the text, or disputing the matter of fact itself, or impeaching the proper divinity of our Saviour, any more than his proper humanity. For this purpose, we have nothing to do but simply to refer to the time when the words were spoken; which was before his crucifixion and passion, and much more, his resurrection and ascension. Now it is not more extraordinary that there should have been a time when our Saviour, though always God as well as man, was not yet omniscient in the latter capacity, though always so in the former; than that there should have been a time when he was not yet omnipotent, in the one capacity, though always so, in the other. And if all power both in heaven and earth was not communicated to him, in his human capacity, before his resurrection and ascension, why should all knowledge? He might not therefore be omniscient now, in his human capacity, no more than omnipotent in the same, when this prophecy was delivered; and yet might become both hereafter. The same act of the Father, which committed all power to him in his mediatorial capacity, when he sat down at his right hand, doubtless committed all knowledge

now be done, was to describe rather than to particularize the period in question ; the nearest approximation to the actual knowledge of the time of the end, which could now be made, was to communicate beforehand the knowledge of the events which should precede it in a certain order, some further off from the end itself, and some nearer to it ; but all implying it to be gradually coming on, and all serving to mark out, with more or less of precision, the several stages of its approach.

From this uncertainty of the time of the fact, it would follow that the fact itself, at its proper time, must take all by surprise ; none would be expecting it at that moment, and therefore none could be prepared for it then. The language of the description next subjoined, intimates thus much. The circumstances of this picture of the state of things in which the arrival of the great catastrophe is supposed to find the destined subjects of its effects, were considered on the former occasion ; and it was there shewn that the delineation of the mode of life, the draught of the employments going on, at the time, was simply a picture of society, such as the world exhibits in the midst of apparent tranquillity, and while there is every reason to calculate upon the continuance of things as they are. The images grouped together in this representation, are consequently not those of a state of society immersed in the grossness of sensual indulgence ; but simply of one off its guard against the approach of danger,

also ; for the possession of omnipotence implies the possession of omniscience. It would be impossible for Jesus Christ, in his human capacity, to exercise all power, both in heaven and earth, and not to exercise all knowledge also.

because unconscious even of its existence. Men would be found, when the catastrophe arrived, not living either worse or better than they had always lived; but just as they had always lived, and just as they would continue to live, if they reckoned upon having still to live.

One characteristic, then, of the predicted event, the appearing and presence of the Son of man, must be its suddenness. Another would be the universality of the ruin and destruction, in which all would be involved, who came within the sphere of its action: an attribute of the coming dispensation, which here also is only too plainly intimated by the analogy of its consequences to the sweeping and indiscriminate destruction, characteristic of the days of Noah; that is, the deluge. From these two properties of the approaching dispensation, the one characteristic of it before it arrived, and the other after, is derived the strongest possible argument of the necessity of an ever wakeful vigilance, both to foresee the danger ere it should arrive, and to take instant advantage of the first opportunity, to escape from its effects.

It has been already shewn, that in their primary sense, the substance of all these declarations may very well be supposed to have been intended to apply, and would be perfectly capable of applying, with a special reference to the first of the dispensations, called the *days* of the Son of man; the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet with this primary reference to the first of the number, the scope of the description may begin from this point, to open into a larger field of view, and through the kindred topic of the first of

these days, to pass to the associated one of the next; the day of the great antichristian contest. Every circumstance of its particulars, whether moral or prophetic, instead of losing in force and propriety, upon this supposition, will be found to gain by it. The qualities, attributes, or properties, of the first of the days of the Son of man, may be predicated of either of the other two: and the characteristic descriptions which suit the former, upon the principle of a general fitness and analogy, may become literally exact, when transferred to the latter. The principal events themselves are related to each other, as type and antitype, as the outline and the substance, as the copy and the original; in which case, the ideas and images of a common description, however generally true of the former, have the advantage in nature, in truth, in reality, when understood of the latter. If the exact moment of the one was not now to be foretold, how much more that of the other! if the destruction produced by the one should be instantaneous and indiscriminate, how much more that of the other! if nothing but a constant vigilance and foresight could preserve from the effects of the one, how much less from those of the other!

We may assume then, with a sufficient degree of probability, that along with an actual resumption of the topic of the coming of the Son of man to the destruction of Jerusalem, at Matt. xxiv. 36, is combined a virtual reference to the kindred topic of his coming to the consummation of all things, (more especially, as I apprehend, to the decision of the antichristian contest,) which becomes more and more distinct, as the discourse proceeds, until at last the first and the proximate topic is totally merged in

the latter and more remote^f. In considering the remainder of the discourse, with this more enlarged and comprehensive reference, especially in St. Matthew's account of it, the most convenient distribution which we could make of it would be into the purely preceptive, and the purely parabolic; not because both these parts may not conspire together to a common purpose, but because such a division of the rest of the discourse in St. Matthew's Gospel will point out the essential difference between the residue of his account of it, and the remainder of St. Mark's and St. Luke's; the latter consisting of practical, with no admixture of parabolic matter, the former with a partial mixture of practical, being composed mainly of parabolic matter.

^f There is a various reading in this passage, *περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης*, viz. *περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας** *ἢ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης*, which is equally well supported by the authority of MSS., the adoption of which would lead to the inference that the common reference of the ensuing section to both these events, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming of Christ at the consummation of all things, is pointed out by the very words which usher it in. I have already observed, that calling the whole of the period devoted to successive manifestations of the power and supremacy of the Son of man, both for the redress of his servants, and for the punishment of his enemies, his *day*—the time of any particular dispensation among the number might be denominated an *hour* of that *day*. The first dispensation, the time of which might be so expressed in relation to the whole, would be the visitation of the Jews; the last, either the decision of the Antichristian contest, or the general judgment; either of which, however, as the sum and substance of every thing of the same kind which had preceded at different times before, might be called the *day* of the Son of man, absolutely, with as much propriety as the period of any particular dispensation previously, an *hour* of that *day*.

In what respects the proper end of the parabolic parts of this division may conspire to a common purpose with that of the preceptive, will appear from the explanation hereafter to be given of the former. But assuming the common end of both parts to be sufficiently well expressed by the proper design and purpose of either ; we may observe upon the language of the purely preceptive part, which requires to be first considered, that it appears, on inspection, to be throughout the same, and couched in such terms as these: βλέπετε “see ye to it;” ἀγρυπνεῖτε, γρηγορεῖτε, προσεύχεσθε “be wakeful, be watchful, pray,” different but synonymous forms of expression to convey the common idea of watchfulness ; and apparently of simple watchfulness. The same conclusion results from comparing with this the language which characterizes the neglect, opposed to the observance of the duty ; the vice, which is the reverse of the virtue ; the habits and dispositions, which would generate a line of conduct, the contrary of that prescribed. These, it appears from Luke xxi. 34, are in general sloth and intemperance, the opposites of sobriety and diligence ; the indulgence of sensual appetites, as liable to blind the eyes to the prospect of the future, while absorbed in the present—to steep the intellectual faculties in a stupid lethargy, the effect of riot and excess—and to unfit both the reasoning and active powers of human nature, for their proper office and proper exertions.

Two consequences would seem to flow from this representation ; one, that the duty, both negatively and positively thus described, is simply the duty of watchfulness ; the duty of being always in a state both of mind and body, to exercise the necessary

vigilance against surprise: the other, that the final end of the duty is to guard against something, however undefined, which simple forethought is competent to anticipate, simple watchfulness is able to avoid. The necessity of vigilance implies the possibility of surprise; but the expediency of vigilance the possibility of escape from it: and those whose duty is placed apparently in the obligation to the exercise of simple vigilance against surprise, as encouraged by the hope of thereby escaping some danger, which must otherwise be incurred—are addressed apparently as if in the situation of watchmen or sentinels, who have a ward and observation to keep, but nothing more; the substance of whose duty is, not to slumber at their post, but to be ever watchful and on the alert—lest some enemy should come upon them unawares: but whether they neglect their duty or perform it, whether they escape the surprise, or fall victims to it, it seems to be equally taken for granted, that they are aware of what they have to expect; the danger against which they were required to be on their guard, was something which common foresight might have anticipated, and common precautions might have obviated.

Neither of these conclusions, however, without certain modifications, would ultimately turn out to be correct. Neither is the whole of the duty inculcated, simple vigilance, nor the danger against which it is supposed to be necessary, something which human prudence could foresee or avoid: as a more particular attention to the state of the case, with respect to the duty and its exercise, will serve to shew.

For first, the event itself against which this duty

is supposed to be exercised beforehand, is the coming of the Son of man; an event, of which the most distinctive characteristic, as we have seen, was to be totally unforeseen and totally unexpected; to be preceded by the unsuspecting confidence of a general security, on the one hand, and followed by the indiscriminateness of a general destruction, on the other. It was to elude all the means of discovery before, and to baffle all the means of escape, after its arrival. It was compared to a thief in the night^ε; whom darkness makes invisible, and who carries on the work of plunder, when men are buried in repose, incapable of perceiving, and therefore of preventing his attempts. It should come on, like a snare, which the hand of the fowler draws slowly, and silently, and insensibly over his prey, until it has enclosed its victims within its sweep—when the discovery of their danger is made too late to escape from its effects. Such a description, then, if strictly applicable to the circumstances of the coming event, while it represents that event as most truly a surprise, excludes all idea of the resources of human prudence, as available to foresee the surprise, and of the abilities of human power, as competent to escape from it. Such a surprise must level every moral, or cir-

^ε This comparison occurs implicitly, Matt. xxiv. 43. But it occurs *ρητῶς*, 1 Thess. v. 2, 3, a passage of St. Paul's Epistles, which agrees so exactly in brief, with the import of all this portion of the prophecy on the mount, that it is impossible to doubt whether the same Spirit which dictated the one, dictated the other; and whether both predictions are destined to find their fulfilment in one and the same event: *αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε, ὅτι ἡ ἡμέρα Κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς ἐν νυκτὶ, οὕτως ἔρχεται· ὅταν γὰρ λέγωσιν· εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια· τότε αἰφνίδιος αὐτοῖς ἐφίσταται ὕληρος, ὥσπερ ἡ ὥδιν τῆ ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσῃ· καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν.*

cumstantial distinction, existing previously among its subjects; the wisdom of the wise must be as much confounded by it, as the folly of the foolish. No vigilance of the wary could be on the alert against it beforehand; no strength of the strong could overpower the evil by resistance; no speed of the swift could outstrip its pursuit by flight. It follows, therefore, that they who are commanded to be always on the watch for an event like this, are commanded to be on the watch against nothing which human sagacity can foresee, or human power oppose; and consequently that the duty enjoined, under the name of vigilance, is not simple vigilance, but at least something, which, though it may resemble simple vigilance in general, must differ from it in particular. And this conclusion may be confirmed finally by various considerations, suggested by the description given, or implied, of its nature, its attributes, its consequences and effects.

For first, the necessity of the vigilance is founded on the supposed uncertainty of the time of some event, which yet was to be such that no foresight should be competent to discover it beforehand; the expediency, in its efficacy to facilitate escape from the consequences of this event, which yet no human ability should otherwise overcome, no human dexterity should otherwise elude. Neither of these considerations could have place, were any thing denoted by the vigilance in question, but any moral fitness, qualifying its subject for any moral effect of a corresponding kind to itself; and not simple vigilance, which would be a specific moral fitness, qualifying for a specific moral effect, of one kind only.

Again, this vigilance is supposed to be the essence of personal merit, where it is present, and the essence of personal demerit, where it is absent : it is the one thing necessary to the discrimination of character, the one thing to be taken into account, in order to the acceptance or the rejection of different classes of moral agents. It distributes the subjects of a common visitation, both before and after the time of its arrival, into those who possessed and exercised the watchfulness in question, and those who did not : its presence in the one being construed as a presumptive title to favour, and to exemption from the consequences of the visitation ; its absence, in the other, as a positive ground of rejection, and of exposure to all the severity of those consequences. Now this is a description of the course of things—of antecedent and consequent, of cause and effect—which can be supposed properly applicable to nothing but the difference which may be expected to be made in the final treatment of moral and responsible agents, according to the difference previously required to be made in their moral estimation respectively.

Again, though the event itself, whensoever it arrived, would take all its subjects equally by surprise—exposed to the same danger beforehand, and with the same chance of escape from it, at the time—yet there would be a marked distinction in the effects of the surprise, unto some, in comparison of the rest ; some should be taken, and others should be left, some should escape, while others should perish—where it was to be expected beforehand, from the circumstance that all were surprised in common, that all should be taken, or all should be left, all should escape, or all should perish. Two conclusions result from this

distinction, apparently not ill-founded ; first, that with respect to their proper treatment, as a consequence of their surprise, all must be equally passive, and subject to some foreign power which overrules their own agency ; secondly, that no regard can be paid to the state in which any are surprised at the time, and therefore an entire regard must be paid to the state in which all had been before, or up to the time. If so, this implies that the consideration which determines the effects of the surprise to both the parties, is not their particular behaviour under the circumstances of the case, but the general character of the life and conduct previously. We may infer then, first, that the event itself, which is followed by such consequences, answers to the idea of a moral dispensation of rewards or punishments, awarded to the subjects of either according to the difference of personal merit or demerit, as evidenced by the difference of the life and conduct ; and secondly, that the vigilance, or want of the vigilance, on the presence of which exemption from the consequences of the event follows in one instance, and on its absence, exposure to their worst results in the other, is not the simple virtue, nor the simple vice, but the difference of the moral character, in its proper subjects, as good or bad, in general.

Again, the examples of the vigilance in question, which are produced in illustration of it, are all so many instances of a moral obedience in general, varying in its nature according to the circumstances of the case. They are all practical energies of the same common principle of action, however diverse in the mode, the subject-matter, or the other individual characteristics of their being ; the principle of diligence, zeal, fidelity, in the fulfilment of an ap-

pointed part, in the discharge of a given duty. The wariness of the sentinel, who is not to be found asleep at his post—the watchfulness of the master of an house, who sits up to protect his property from the nocturnal plunderer—the vigilance of the porter, who is bound at all times to keep the door—and every other image employed to describe the same thing—are all so many instances of the particular observance of one and the same duty; the duty required by the time and occasion. The vice too, which is opposed to this virtue, the specific causes which are supposed most likely to endanger the exercise of the vigilance in question, are such as can properly be opposed to nothing but a life of uniform piety and virtue. For though the sensual indulgences of riot and intemperance might be mentioned, as naturally the parents of sloth and lethargy—the cares that appertain to this life, would not be specified also, as equally opposed to the vigilance prescribed, if there were not as much to fear, in behalf of the duty in question, from habits of worldly-mindedness, which engross the soul with temporal objects and pursuits, and fix its affections upon earthly things, as from excess and sensuality themselves. The effect of the latter is to deaden, to stupefy, and brutalize; the effect of the former, to monopolize. The one would render the soul incapable of reflection or discrimination at all; the other incapable of reflecting aright, or discriminating justly between the different value of the ends and objects, proposed to its choice and pursuit. Vigilance, then, as opposed to the one, is a life of soberness and temperance in the indulgence of the appetites of sense; and as opposed to the other, is a life of active and

ardent piety—which rising superior to the cares and desires of this sublunary scene, where the more we are busied in things around us, the more likely we are to forget the things of futurity, fixes the thoughts upon the concerns of another life, and spiritualizes even the love and pursuit of present and sensible objects, by making them subservient to an heavenly-mindedness of principle.

Lastly, the description which is given of the event itself is that of a judicial process. It is the supposed institution of an inquiry into the exercise of some responsible trust. Its effects, in a particular instance, are the supposed consequences of that responsibility. The motive proposed to the performance of the duty is a moral motive, arising out of this view of the obligation to it; the desire of the subject of the duty to approve himself to the favourable sentence of a judge to whom he is accountable, and who has power to absolve or to punish him, to award or to deny him a recompense.

How exactly all these descriptions would agree to what may be expected from the nature, design, and consequences of such an event as the return of Christ to judgment, it can scarcely be necessary to observe. The vigilance, then, which is supposed to be the virtue so needful to qualify its subjects for the coming of such an event as this, must be that constant recollection of their accountability, which is incumbent on those who are placed in a state of probation, and that constant preparation for rendering their account, which nothing can bestow but the diligent and unintermitted discharge of the duties of their appointed station, in which their proper probation

consists. And hence we may derive a sufficient explanation of the obscurity which hangs over the time of this event in particular; and why it should be known to none but the Supreme Intelligence. It cannot be made known to his creatures in the present state of things, because it is not fitting to be made known: the end of that discipline, which is coextensive with the duration of this state of things, would be endangered by its being disclosed. There is no security for the constant discharge of the duties of a given station, except in the continual consciousness of a responsibility for that discharge; there is no security for the continual consciousness of a responsibility, except in the reflection that an account is always impending; however delayed it is never excused, however distant it must one day arrive^h. The habits of practical virtue must be formed and reside in moral agents, if their lives and actions are to be uniformly accommodated to the standard of their duty; but they will not be formed, nor kept alive in them, except by constantly meditating on the great end for which they were placed in their temporary state of probation; and what influence their conduct here, during a limited period of being, must exert in determining their condition hereafter, through all eternity. The certainty of the account which all must give—the uncertainty of the time when each must be called to his own; the present labour and diligence in the discharge of an appointed part, which is the direct practical result of both—are the

^h Tertullian, iv. 286. De Anima 33: Et hoc semel, (judicabit sc. Deus,) et in eum diem quem solus pater novit, ut pendula exspectatione sollicitudo fidei probetur, semper diem observans, dum semper ignorat; quotidie timeas, quod quotidie sperat.

whole implied by the vigilance required of Christians; and all that is necessary to its full effect. If the fatal moment finds them thus employed, however suddenly and unexpectedly it may arrive, it cannot take them by surprise; for it cannot find them unprepared for their account. No steward can ever be unfit to resign a trust, who is intent upon it at all times with equal fidelity; no servant can be afraid to appear, on any summons, before a master, in whose service he is always engaged with equal diligence; no innocent person can be afraid to present himself at any time before a judge, from whose justice he knows he has nothing to apprehend.

Considered in this point of view, it is indifferent to the end proposed by the uncertainty in question, whether the appointed moment of the final account be the day of judgment, or the day of death. The same obscurity hangs over the latter; doubtless for the same reason, that men should so live at all times, as to be at any time prepared to die. But the period of death is virtually the period of judgment also; since after death comes the judgment, and there is no more trial or probation between the one and the otherⁱ. The day when a man is called

ⁱ Hebrews, ix. 27: καὶ καθ' ὅσον ἀπόκειται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀπαξ ἀποθανεῖν, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο κρίσις. The use of this verb, ἀπόκειται, is remarkable; meaning *it is reserved, it is kept in store, not it is appointed*, unto men to die once. Irenæus, in a fragment of his works, defines it to be the ἔργον of a Christian's life, "to practise 'how to die:'" Operr. 468. l. 17. Fragm. 4. Justin M. Dialog. 232. 28: διὸ καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἶπεν' ἐν οἷς ἂν ὑμᾶς καταλάβω ἐν τούτοις καὶ κρινῶ: probably from some apocryphal Gospel; though it may also be the substance in brief of what might be learnt from the canonical Gospels, particularly from certain of our Saviour's parables, and even from this pro-

away from life, is as good as the day when he is called to his account. The interval between death and the resurrection, may be longer or shorter in itself; but it is of no moment, as a period of suspense between death and judgment, whether it be long or short; it weighs as nothing in the scale of moral responsibility, and neither adds to, nor diminishes from, the things done in the body. As the tree falls so it lies (*Ecclesiastes*, xi. 3.); and as life will leave us, so the judgment will find us. No increase, that we know of, can be made after death to the amount of personal good desert, nor any thing detracted from the amount of personal ill desert, contracted in life; or none that will be taken into account at the day of doom. The everlasting destination of every moral agent, is as irrevocably fixed at the hour of his departure from the world, by the tenor of his past existence; as if his final audit were forthwith to be transacted, and his final sentence to be pronounced and executed upon him. Whatever be the nature of that intermediate state of being, in which departed souls continue to exist, before their reunion with the body; whatever difference the justice of God may even now make, in the disposal and treatment of the good and the bad respectively; whatever may be the separate occupations, enjoyments, or sufferings, of each in their proper place and sphere; we may be certain of thus much, that

pleeey on the mount. *Clemens Rom. Ep. ii^a. cap. 8*: μετὰ γὰρ τὸ ἐξελεθεῖν ἡμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, οὐκέτι δυνάμεθα ἐκεῖ ἐξομολογήσασθαι, ἢ μετανοεῖν ἔτι. *Cyprian, ad Demetrianum, 196*: Quando istine excessum fuerit, nullus jam pœnitentiæ locus est, nullus satisfactionis effectus: hic vita aut omittitur aut tenetur; hic salutis æternæ cultu Dei, et fructu fidei providetur.

this interval is devoted to no purpose, nor transacted in any manner, which will be taken into consideration at the last day, or possess the least weight in deciding the everlasting fortunes of either the good or the bad, according to the judgment of that day.

PARABLE

OF

THE SERVANT LEFT INSTEAD OF HIS LORD. ALLEGORICAL.

MATTHEW, XXIV. 45—51. HARMONY, IV. 79.

MATTHEW, XXIV. 45—51.

45 “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath appointed over his servants, to give them their maintenance in due season? 46 Blessed *shall be* that servant, whom his lord, being come, shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, He will appoint him over all his possessions. 48 But if that evil servant should say in his heart, My lord is long in coming; 49 and should begin to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat and to drink together with those that are drunken; 50 the lord of that servant shall come in a day which he expecteth not, and in an hour which he knoweth not; 51 and shall cut him off, and set his portion together with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and the gnashing of the teeth.”

The parabolic part of this remaining division of the discourse commences with the 45th verse of the xxivth of St. Matthew. Of the component parts of this division, the substance of all, from verse 45 to

the end of the chapter, consisting of the parable of the servant left instead of his lord, has been anticipated, in the explanation given of it, where it first occurred, Luke xii. 42—46, to which I refer the reader^k. The second portion of it is the parable of the ten virgins; upon the consideration of which I propose to enter next.

^k Vol. iii. 280—335.

PARABLE TWENTY-SIXTH.
ALLEGORICAL.

THE TEN VIRGINS.

MATTHEW, XXV. 1—13. HARMONY, IV. 79.

MATTHEW, XXV. 1—13.

1 “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten
“virgins, who, having taken their lamps, went forth for the
“purpose of meeting the bridegroom. 2 Now five there were
“of them wise, and the *other* five foolish; 3 which foolish ones,
“having taken their own lamps, did not take with themselves
“oil; 4 but the wise ones took oil in their vessels together with
“their lamps. 5 And the bridegroom being long *in coming*,
“they all became drowsy, and began to sleep. 6 And at mid-
“night a cry took place, Behold, the bridegroom is coming:
“come ye forth for the purpose of meeting him. 7 Then did
“all those virgins awake, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the
“foolish ones said to the wise ones, Give to us from your oil;
“because our lamps are beginning to go out. 9 And the wise
“ones answered, saying, Peradventure there may not suffice for
“us and for you; but go ye rather to those that sell *it*, and buy
“for yourselves. 10 And as they were going away to buy, the
“bridegroom came, and the *virgins* that were ready went in to-
“gether with him, unto the wedding-feast; and the door was
“closed. 11 And afterwards the remaining virgins also come,
“saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. 12 And he answered and
“said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch ye,
“therefore; because ye know not the day, nor the hour, wherein
“the Son of man is coming.”

MATERIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE groundwork of the parabolic representation in the present instance, being the celebration of a marriage solemnity; the circumstances of the narrative are necessarily such as must be supposed to make part of the celebration of these solemnities, according to the usages of the nations of the East in general, or to those of the Jews in particular.

The history of a marriage solemnity, if dated from the earliest possible period, must go as far back as the time of the formation of the marriage contract; which is properly the ceremony of the espousals. The spousal ceremony among the Jews, was not less solemn, nor less important, in its order of time, than that of the marriage; and the interval between the two was of determinate length ^a. A

^a Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus*, *Operr.* ii. 311. 42, observes, with reference to espousals; *αἱ γὰρ ὁμολογίαι γάμοις ἰσοδυναμοῦσιν, αἰς ἀνδρὸς ὄνομα καὶ γυναικὸς, καὶ τᾶλλα τὰ ἐπὶ συνόδοις ἐγγράφεται.* Marriage, in fact, among the Jews was necessarily preceded by espousals; and with respect to a variety of legal forms, requisite to be observed to enter into the spousal contract, and to give it due effect, there was almost as much solemnity about the ceremony of espousals, as about the marriage itself. The interval between the espousals and the marriage could not be less than a month, (see *Joseph. Ant. Jud.* xvi. vii. 3. Cf. *Deuteron.* xvi. 13.) and might be any greater length of time. Many instances may be produced of females affianced in marriage, at two, five, or seven years old, as well as at the proper age for marriage.

Espousals partook of an equal degree of formality among the Romans also; and an action would lie for the violation of the spousal contract: see *Aulus Gellius*, iv. 4: *Servius ad Æneid.* x. 79: while, according to the Jewish law, as it is well known, the breach of the contract of marriage by the crime of unfaith-

narrative, however, which assumes the period of the nuptial union to be arrived or close at hand, must suppose the period assigned to the duration of the nuptial contract to be past. The ceremonial of the parabolic representation is consequently strictly that of a wedding, and not of espousals; though the ceremonial of a wedding itself, as being the consummation of the nuptial contract, presupposes the ceremony of the espousals, and the transaction of the interval allotted to the duration of the nuptial contract, before its own action can begin.

The persons, then, who could be described as taking part in a transaction like this, would necessarily be such, and such alone, as could be concerned in the celebration of a marriage solemnity. Among these, it is evident, that one, to sustain the character of the bridegroom, and another, to sustain the character of the bride, would be the most essential and indispensable of all; whose proper relation to each other, from the time of the formation of the nuptial contract, to the period of the marriage solemnity, would be that of the espouser and of the espoused, and after it, that of the husband and the wife. One such personage is accordingly spoken of, and a part is attributed to him, which could be assigned to none but the bridegroom, and consequently to none but the principal party, in the history of such a transaction as the consummation of a marriage union. But the correlative party to this, and next to the bridegroom, the most important of all, however necessarily to be understood, is not distinctly specified.

fulness in either of the parties, was considered and resented as equivalent to adultery.

The true reason of this omission may appear hereafter. At present it is sufficient to observe, in explanation of it, that if the personal agency of the bride was not concerned in the nature and effect of the transaction, about to be recorded; the existence of such a person might be left to implication, without being expressly mentioned.

Next to the two principal parties, those who would naturally be most concerned in the transaction of such an event as their marriage union, would be the mutual or the individual friends of each; whose proper relation to the nature of an occasion like a marriage solemnity, would be that of the guests invited to the nuptial festivity, which celebrates the union of the principal parties, and who are intended to take part in it along with them. Among these subordinate parties, the reason of the thing, and the established usage of the Jews in the celebration of marriage festivities, would render it presumptively probable that the friends and attendants of the bride would be of one sex, and form one class of the guests, and those of the bridegroom would be of the opposite sex, and would constitute another class^b.

^b Origen, *Operum* iii. 12. A—B.; or Hieron. *Operr.* ii. 809. *ad med.*; In *Canticum Canticorum*, it is observed, with respect to the nature and variety of the persons, who take a part in the Song of Solomon, *Orantibus autem nobis, et revelante Domino, quatuor mihi in his videor invenisse personas, virum et sponsam, cum sponſa adolescentulás, cum sponſo sodalium greges. alia dicuntur a sponſa, alia a sponſo, nonnulla a juvenenlis, quædam a sodalibus sponſi. congruum quippe est ut in nuptiis adolescentularum sit multitudo cum sponſa, juvenum turba cum sponſo.* Cf. the xviii. Idyll. of Theocritus, which is an epitha-

The particulars of the celebration of a nuptial solemnity, dated with the arrival of the nuptial evening, naturally divide themselves into those which precede the commencement of the nuptial feast, and those which follow upon it; to the former of which we may give the name of the nuptial preparation, and to the latter that of the nuptial consummation. The circumstances of the nuptial preparation would consist of the following particulars: the previous

lamium, or nuptial song upon the marriage of Menelaus and Helen: and the lxi. lxvii. and lxiv, Carmina of Catullus, all which are epithalamia, or nuptial songs also.

That it was usual among the Jews, at least, for the bridal procession of females to be accompanied by a retinue of friends of their own age and sex, appears from the testimony of the forty-fifth Psalm; which speaking of the union whether of a real or a mystical bride, in the character of a queen, to a real or a mystical bridegroom, in the character of a king, (which so far as concerns the custom, the foundation of such allusions, would be indifferent,) uses this language, in reference to the supposed attendants on the queen:

9 “ King’s daughters were among thy honourable women:
“ upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

14 “ She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-
“ work; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be
“ brought unto thee.

15 “ With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they
“ shall enter into the king’s palace.”

Chrysostom, Comm. in Nov. T. v. 123. C. in i. ad Corinthios, Hom. xii., speaking of the marriage-ceremonies in his day, recognizes the presence of young women about the bride, as follows; *καὶ τὸ δὴ χαλεπώτερον, ὅτι καὶ παρθένου παραγίνονται τούτοις, πᾶσαν ἀποδυσάμεναι τὴν αἰδῶ, εἰς τὴν τῆς νυμφευομένης τιμὴν, μάλλον δὲ ὕβριν, κ', τ. λ.* Again, in Acta Apostolorum Homil. xxxiv. tom. iii. 310. A.; *καθάπερ γὰρ ἐπὶ νύμφης, κἂν παστᾶδες ὧσιν ἐκ παραπετασμάτων χρυσῶν, κἂν χοροὶ ὧσι γυναικῶν εὐειδιστάτων, καὶ καλῶν, κἂν ῥόδα, κἂν στέμματα, κἂν ὁ νυμφίος κυλὸς ἦ, καὶ αἱ θεράπαινα, καὶ αἱ φίλαι, κἂν πάντες εὐπρεπεῖς ὧσιν . . . ὄφελος οὐδέν.*

assemblage of the common or individual friends of the two principal parties about each, in quality of their guests at the approaching feast; the previous junction of both the bridal parties with the proper attendance of each; and the previous procession of all in common to the house where the nuptial feast was to be kept. The circumstances of the nuptial consummation would consist of all those ceremonies, which were usual upon such occasions, when the celebration of the feast had begun. It is manifest, then, that the precise point of time which separates these two periods from each other, as integral parts of the same ceremony, is the arrival of the nuptial party at the house where the nuptial feast is to be kept. Whatever precedes this point of time, in the œconomy of the same ceremony, belongs to the nuptial preparation—whatever follows upon it, to the nuptial consummation; and though successive parts of one and the same ceremony, and both alike necessary to the effect of the whole, yet they are so far distinct from each other, that either of them might furnish the groundwork of a different parabolic representation, and either of them, as furnishing such a groundwork, might be directed to a proper moral use of its own.

Now this distinction is observed to prevail with respect to the parabolic representation in the present instance. The part of the œconomy of a nuptial solemnity, selected for the narrative, is the nuptial preparation, not the nuptial consummation; for beginning with the arrival of the nuptial night, the detail of its circumstances is brought down to the very eve of the celebration of the nuptial feast; but it does not pass to the description of the feast. It fol-

lows from this distinction, first, that the proper relation of the principal parties to each other, for the period embraced by the action of the parable, however near it may be brought to the relation of the married state, is still strictly that of the future husband and the future wife ; in other words, still that of the bridegroom and the bride : secondly, that the proper relation of the subordinate characters to the nature of the occasion in which they take part, independent of their personal relation to the bridegroom or to the bride, as the mutual or private friends of each—for the same period of time, is the relation of the guests invited, but not yet admitted to the celebration of the nuptial feast. Nor is this an unimportant distinction ; for, as we have often had occasion to observe, the relation of a guest invited is not necessarily that of a guest admitted to a festivity of this description ; and under the circumstances of the case, the relation of a guest invited to a wedding-feast, in the East, (regard being had to the peculiar usages with which such weddings were celebrated among them,) might never be succeeded by that of a guest admitted to it^a. The relation, then, of a guest invited to a ceremony of this description, may be the relation of one, possessed of a valuable or desirable privilege in prospect, but not necessarily sure of enjoying it at last : a privilege, which even as possessed by him in prospect, must be derived from his personal relation to some one else, but as retained to the end, must altogether depend on himself.

The relation of the principal and the subordinate parties being thus accommodated to each other, and

^a Vide supra, vol. iii. 450—452.

to the nature of the occasion in which they all bear a certain part ; it might have been expected that the same personal distinction would be made between the subordinate as between the principal parties ; that is, that the friends and companions of the bridegroom would be contradistinguished to the friends and attendants of the bride, by a separate part assigned to each. Some friends and companions of the bridegroom are certainly alluded to in the course of the narrative, as well as the bridegroom himself ; and their presence and attendance about him are no doubt intended to serve some proper purpose. With respect, however, to the general character of guests, belonging to the subordinate parties in a nuptial solemnity, and of guests invited, but not yet admitted to the nuptial feast (which is the proper relation of the subordinate parties in the nuptial preparation, distinct from the nuptial consummation) ; the character and relation of the personal friends of one of the principal parties would be nothing different from those of the personal friends of the other ; and either might be made the subjects of a parabolic representation, which concerned them in a common capacity. But were any thing to be supposed to befall them, in this proper capacity of guests, owing in part to the personal agency of the bridegroom, the reason of the thing would require that the subjects of such a representation, if described in their proper relation to either of the parties, should be described as the friends and attendants of the bride, not as the friends and attendants of the bridegroom. A certain effect might be supposed to befall them, as the future guests at the nuptial feast, in one of these capacities, through

the instrumentality of the bridegroom, which under the circumstances of the case, could never be supposed to have befallen them in the other.

Beginning with the arrival of the nuptial night, and supposing the fact of a previous invitation, which anciently in the East, did not long precede the time fixed for the celebration of the festivity, the parable represents the subordinate parties, described as a company of virgins, in the act of going forth to meet the bridegroom; a statement which requires some explanation. That they must not be supposed to go forth directly to meet the bridegroom, nor consequently to the place where he was, appears from the result; that they must be supposed to go forth to some quarter different from that whence they set out, and some quarter where they might expect to meet with the bridegroom at last, follows from the necessity of the case. We may presume, then, that the place to which they are supposed to go, is the house of the bride; and the object for which they go thither, is to join the bride, and to wait in her company for the arrival of the bridegroom—to conduct both the bride and her attendants, from her own house to the bridegroom's house, where only the nuptial festivity could be celebrated. The arrival and presence of the bridegroom, at last, therefore, have for their object the discharge of this duty in behalf both of the bride and her companions; the assemblage and presence of the virgins previously have for theirs, the being ready on the first summons to accompany the bride, out of honour and respect to herself. And such being the final end of their preliminary assemblage about the person of the

bride—even the number of their company which is stated as ten in all, acquires a propriety that it might otherwise have seemed to want. The marriage of two private individuals, if such may be supposed the nature of the solemnity in the parable, might not require a greater number of personal friends, as the immediate attendants of the bride; and yet a marriage, which bears the appearance of a certain degree of pomp and ceremony, might not have been consistent with less. Besides which, it appears from the event, that though a greater number of personal attendants on the bride, at the commencement of the ceremony, than ten, might have been supposed without impropriety, a smaller number could not: in other words, that the narrative assumes in this particular circumstance, the least possible supposition which could have been made, for the sake of the effect designed by the supposition itself.

A nuptial entertainment, like every other banquet of an extraordinary kind, in the East, as we have often had occasion to observe, being celebrated at night^b, and consequently being properly a supper;

^b Ovid, *Heroidum Epp.*

Sed tamen experiar. modo facta crepuscula terris;

Ultima pars noctis, primaque lucis erat:

Ducimur Inachides magni sub tecta Pelasgi;

Et socer armatas accipit æde nurus.

Undique collucent præcinctæ lampades auro:

Dantur in invitos impia thura focos, &c.

Hypermnestra Lynceo 21.

All the nuptial entertainments, instances of which were collected in illustration of the parable of the wedding-garment, were celebrated in the evening.

It appears from the letter of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, quoted by Eusebins, *E. II. vi. 40. 236. A.* that such was

the provision of lamps, to accompany the nuptial procession in public from the house of one of the parties to that of the other, would be matter of course; especially in the case of those who acted as the subordinate parties, in quality of the attendants and retinue of the bridegroom or of the bride. The circumstance, then, that the virgins are supposed to set out, to discharge this duty in behalf of the bride, prepared from the first with lamps, which they continue to retain ever after, and to find as necessary at last as at first, is no more than was to be expected at the outset of a narrative like this^c. It is evi-

the custom in Egypt, in his time, about the middle of the third century. Speaking of a certain countryman, the writer says: ἀπῆει δὲ εὐωχησόμενος γάμους· (διαπαννυχίζειν γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐν ταῖς ταῖς αὐταῖς σονόδοις ἔθος·) κ', τ. λ.

Chrys. Comm. in Nov. Test. v. 127. A—B. in i. ad Corinthios, Homilia xii: ἰδὲ τὰ ἐντεῦθεν λοιπόν· οὐκ ἐν ἡμέρα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐσπέρα μεθύοντας ἄνδρας καὶ κεκαρωμένους, καὶ πεπυρωμένους ὑπὸ τῆς τρυφῆς, οἱ κάλλος ὕψεως ὄραν παρασκευάζουσι παρθενικῆς· καὶ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκίας, ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς εἰς ἐπίδειξιν ἐκπομπέουσι, μετὰ λαμπάδων αὐτὴν παραπέμποντες ἐν ἐσπέρα βυθεία· κ', τ. λ.

^c Harmer mentions, ii. 431. chapter x. obs. xxii. in a note from sir J. Chardin, that “ In many parts of the East, and particularly in the Indies, instead of torches and flambeaux, they “ carry a pot of oil in one hand, and a lamp full of oily rags in “ the other.” Again, i. 355. chap. iv. obs. xxxv. from the same author, that lights are used in a particular manner at marriage-solemnities in the East; but this, it appears, is meant of their use indoors, in the respective apartments of the bride and the bridegroom.

Vol. ii. 122, 123. chap. vi. obs. xlvi. some particulars are given from D'Arvieux, and sir John Chardin, relating to the modern marriage customs in the East: which, however, do not throw much, if any, light on the parable.

Vol. iii. 295, 296. chap. vi. obs. lxxix. there is a description, from Dr. Russel, of a modern Maronite wedding, which is more

dent, however, under such circumstances, that the possession of a lamp, though arising out of this necessity, admits of being regarded as the symbol of something else; for as none could be described as provided with a lamp beforehand, who was not expected to take a part in a procession by night, constituting in the present instance, the nuptial train; and as none could be expected to take a part in such a procession, who was not intended to partake in the nuptial festivity: the possession of a lamp, which is first and properly the token of a party directly concerned in a nuptial procession by night, is secondarily and indirectly the badge and insigne of a guest invited to the nuptial feast. In the first of these capacities it is the mark of distinction to point out the personal friends and connections of the parties in the nuptial contract, up to the time of their union; in the second, it is the token and symbol of the guests in whose company the festivity which commemorates their union, at the proper time of that event, is to be celebrated at last; and who enjoy beforehand the privilege of being invited to it, and the right in prospect of partaking in it.

Now that the provision of a lamp supposes the provision of oil for its use, is too obvious to require any proof. This supply of oil, implied in the provision of a lamp for any instance of its use at all—

to the purpose—especially where it is said, “At midnight, or a few hours later, the relations, accompanied by all that have been invited to the wedding, men and women, return once more to the house where the bride is, in procession, each carrying a candle, and music playing before them. When they come to the door, it is shut upon them,” &c.

we may call the *ordinary* supply ; and that the provision of lamps, and consequently of such a supply of oil as this, is to be assumed of each of the virgins in common, follows both from the necessity of the provision to them all, as going forth on an occasion by night, requiring it alike from all, and from the express declaration of the narrative. That they go forth too, not only provided with lamps, and with the ordinary supply of oil, but with lamps ready lighted, may be inferred both from the time, when they must be supposed to go forth, which is evening, or the fall of night, and from the fact, that their lamps had nearly burned themselves out, by the time of the arrival of the bridegroom ; and therefore must have been burning a long while previously. That they go forth, then, in the first instance, with their lamps ready for immediate use, and consequently in the expectation that they would be speedily wanted, is justly to be inferred ; and that they could not be wanted immediately, except on the supposition of the coming of the bridegroom immediately, would be equally obvious. Were this coming, then, to take place, as matter of course, at the usual time when marriage solemnities began to be celebrated, and consequently when the arrival of the bridegroom was first to be expected—that is, early in the evening or soon after nightfall ; the mere possession of a ready-lighted lamp with its ordinary supply of oil, would have been all that was necessary to qualify any one of the virgins for bearing her part in the nuptial procession, and to ensure her the safe enjoyment of her particular privilege, as one of the guests at the nuptial feast.

But if the appearance of the bridegroom should

by any means happen to be delayed beyond the usual time, the ordinary supply of oil, which qualified the lamp solely for immediate use, might possibly be consumed before his arrival. In this case, some further supply in reserve would be wanted to feed the flame of the lamp; or the possession of the lamp would become useless, to qualify the bearer to take her part in a nuptial procession by night, and to entitle her to a place at the nuptial board, as one of the guests in the feast. So far then as the secure enjoyment of this privilege to the end was desirable in itself; the expediency of guarding beforehand against the possible risk of losing it, whether in this, or in any other way, would be evident. It is the essence of prudence, to look beyond present appearances; to guard itself against surprise, even under circumstances of seeming security; to anticipate evil, and provide against it, before it arrives, and to be as much prepared for distant and possible, as for nearer and probable contingencies. And whether such an occurrence as the delay of the bridegroom, with his proper train of personal friends, beyond the usual time when they might be expected, was to be contemplated as matter of course, or not; yet if it was manifestly possible, and were it to occur, would necessarily produce such and such an effect upon the friends and companions of the bride; there would be as much wisdom in making provision against this event beforehand, as folly in neglecting to do so. Part of the virgins accordingly seem to have contemplated this remote, yet possible, contingency, and to have taken a precaution, calculated, in case it should occur, to guard against its consequences to themselves; and part either not to

have foreseen it, or not to have considered it likely to happen, and consequently to have made no provision against it.

The name of wise, or rather of prudent and circumspect, was consequently justly to be given to the former, and that of foolish, or rather of imprudent and thoughtless, to the latter; but to each as opposed to the other, with a special reference to the difference of their personal conduct under the similarity, or rather the identity, of their personal circumstances and situation. For wisdom and folly, prudence and imprudence, are necessarily practical qualities, as well as personal; which discriminate their proper subjects by the visible difference of personal behaviour, with no visible difference of personal necessities to require a certain behaviour, or of personal means and opportunities to facilitate it. The good of the subject, whether real or imaginary, but as still distant or future, and as dependent upon the subject itself, must be just as much at the bottom of the practical quality of folly, as of the practical quality of wisdom: the presence of means and opportunities, within its power at the time, is as necessary to the one, to be abused or neglected, as to the other, to be applied and directed aright: the faculty of contrivance, characteristic of wisdom, must be attested and put to the proof, by the same occasions, calling for the same personal exertions, and casting the subject upon the same personal resources, the occurrence of which detects and exposes the absence of that faculty, so characteristic of folly.

The precaution adopted by one part of the virgins might just as readily have been adopted by the other; and the end to which it was directed for the

benefit of those who adopted it, was just as personal and just as desirable to the others. But the danger against which that precaution was directed, was foreseen by the one, and not foreseen by the other; and for not foreseeing a danger which might have been foreseen by both, and for not taking a precaution against it which ought to have been taken by both, one half of their number must be called improvident and thoughtless, for the same reason that the other half was to be styled provident and circumspect.

By this difference of personal conduct, under the identity of personal circumstances, a distinction of personal character becomes visibly established among the virgins in question, that is, among the complex of the same assembly, collected together for a common purpose, and so far partaking in a common character—which might be expected to lead in the end to a difference of personal consequences, affecting each according to the difference of their personal character. With respect to the grounds of the distinction so established—the provision of a certain contrivance by one part of the number, and the neglect of that provision by the other, was the same thing in itself, and directed to the same end, or likely to be followed by the same effect, in one case as in another: and therefore so far as it served to discriminate the personal character of one of the number, it served to discriminate that of another. Taken together, the wise, as opposed to the foolish, were equally wise; the foolish, as opposed to the wise, were equally foolish: and taken individually, in reference to the members of their own class, for the

purpose supposed in the exercise of that personal quality of wisdom in the parable, any of the wise was as wise as the rest; none of the foolish was more so than the rest. The number of the wise itself is supposed to be equal to that of the foolish; a supposition, which may be due partly to the decorum of character, requisite to be observed in the narrative—since, out of the same company of young women in general, had the amount of the wise been greater than that of the foolish, it might have appeared inconsistent with the natural thoughtlessness of the sex; and partly to the necessity of the case—since, if the number of the wise had been less than the number of the foolish, the bride might have been left, in the end, without a decent retinue of attendants.

Now, with regard to this supply of oil in reserve, in taking which along with them beforehand, the precaution adopted by the wise virgins consisted; in the first place, the vessels containing it must have been distinct from the lamps; secondly, these vessels are spoken of as their own—the lamps, for which the oil in reserve would be wanted, are not. Hence, though their lamps might have been received from any other quarter, the vessels in question must have been provided for themselves. The original provision of the lamps, with their ordinary supply of oil, conveying as it did the privilege of an invited guest, or being an evidence thereof, might be due to a cause independent of themselves, and affecting them all, both the wise and the unwise, alike—whether proximity of relation to the parties in the wedding—acquaintanceship—or the like: but the pro-

vision of vessels, at the same time, distinct from the lamps, and intended for a different purpose, was a precaution which emanated from the wise virgins themselves, and therefore was entirely their own; and as not imitated by their companions, was a precaution confined to them.

The supply of oil laid up in these vessels, being necessarily something distinct from the stock contained in the lamps, if that was to be called the *ordinary* supply, this must be called the *extraordinary*. As each of these supplies, however, was intended for a common purpose, viz. to prevent the extinction, and consequently the inefficiency of the lamps, (the first supply, on the supposition that the lamps would be wanted for immediate use, the second, in case they might not be wanted until some time after—the former, on the assumption that the arrival of the bridegroom would take place at the usual period—the latter, on the supposition that it might possibly be delayed beyond it; the former, as an adequate provision for the first and most immediate necessities of the lamp, but not for more; the latter, as furnishing the means of feeding the flame, from time to time afterwards, as there might be occasion,) if the possession of a lamp with its ordinary supply of oil was the badge of an invited guest, the provision and possession of a vessel, containing oil in reserve, and capable of repairing, if necessary, the waste of the oil in the lamp—being so clearly instrumental to the continued efficiency of the lamp, and consequently to the continued possession of the character and privilege of an invited guest, may be considered, on the same principle, the ensign and token of an admitted guest.

Between the time of the first setting out of the virgins, to meet the bridegroom, and the arrival of his nuptial procession, a delay is supposed to intervene, produced by the absence of the bridegroom. The cause of this absence is not specified; but that it was something extraordinary and irregular, under the circumstances of the case, would be almost self-evident; for the celebration of a marriage, which could not even go forward, much less be consummated without him, would necessarily require his presence—and if it was to go forward and be consummated at a stated time, it would require his personal attendance at a stated time. Nor is the irregularity in the present instance something inconsiderable; for the consummation of a ceremony, which according to the usages of the East, should have begun with the first or second hour of the night, is delayed by it until midnight.

The absence of the bridegroom, however, whether accidental or intentional in itself, produces certain effects which it is proper to mention, as of no slight importance to the nature and succession of particulars, in bringing about the final result, and developing the proper moral of an history like this. For in the first place, if the arrival of the bridegroom did not take place at the time when it was ordinarily to have been expected, the parties in waiting for that event, would not know at what time afterwards to expect it; and the consequence of this uncertainty would be, that at the precise time when it should ultimately take place, they might not be prepared for it. Again, the supply of oil originally provided for the lamps of the virgins, which was calculated to serve only on the supposition that they

would be wanted for immediate use, might possibly be exhausted before the arrival of the bridegroom; in which case, the expediency of some fresh supply, the wisdom of having taken a precaution against such a contingency, the imprudence and folly of having neglected to take it, would be clearly ascertained by the event. The difference of personal character in one part of the same company compared with the other, as founded in the difference of personal conduct under circumstances exactly the same, could not have been illustrated and cleared up, by any other event but this: for though the wisdom of the one part, and the folly of the other, must have been the same thing, in the principle, under all circumstances—neither could have become evident, as a personal attribute of character, in opposition to the other, except from its effects; and without the intervention of so critical a contingency as the necessity of waiting for the bridegroom beyond the usual time—these effects, as dependent on the adoption of a certain precaution, suggested by the wisdom of the one, and on the neglect of it, as the consequence of the folly of the other, could have had no room to take place. There might have been the same prudence in guarding beforehand against a possible emergency, whether it had occurred or not; and the same imprudence, in not foreseeing, and providing for it: but the wise would have been no better for their foresight, and the unwise no worse for their improvidence, if the event had not proved the precaution in question to be necessary.

The interval of suspense between the first expectation of the bridegroom, and the time of his actual

arrival, is measured in the parable by the intermediate period between the time when wedding solemnities commonly began to be celebrated, (an early hour in the evening,) and midnight. This period, generally speaking, is the interval within which people retire to rest for the night, or naturally find themselves admonished of the necessity of doing so, by the sensation of drowsiness, or a growing disposition to go to sleep. The circumstance then, that the virgins while waiting for the arrival of the bridegroom, as that continued to be delayed, began to grow drowsy, and at last fell asleep, is mentioned simply as the consequence of the time of the night, and the previous necessity under which they were placed of continuing to sit up, and be on the watch, when they should otherwise have gone to rest: and as the natural effect of a situation in which both classes of them were placed alike, it was equally excusable, or equally blameable, in each.

And hence, if the slumbering of the wise, during this interval of suspense, could not render them less secure, with respect to the purpose for which they were waiting, than they would have been, if they had continued awake; neither could the slumbering of the foolish make them more insecure: that is, if the wise, before they fell asleep, had taken a precaution which was calculated to guard them against the contingency of being found sleeping when the bridegroom came, and the foolish had neglected to take it; the circumstance that the interval of suspense, before his arrival, was spent by either more or less in sleep, could not make them better or worse prepared for the event of his coming, than if they

had continued awake. The lamps of neither party had yet begun to expire, and consequently yet to want a fresh supply of oil, until the moment of the arrival of the bridegroom, which was the moment when both were awakened out of their sleep; and the failure of the first supply, of however little consequence the discovery might be to the wise, and however serious and important in its effects, to the unwise, not being discovered by either until the critical moment when the lamps were wanted for immediate use, it is manifest that it would not have been discovered by either, until the same moment, though they had never gone to sleep.

The sleep, then, even of the foolish virgins, during the absence of the bridegroom, is not to be considered instrumental to any such purpose as that of hiding from their own observation, the error which they had committed, in not providing a supply of oil to be ready against all contingencies. Its legitimate purpose, amidst the other circumstances of the narrative, is one which affects both the parties in the parable alike; and is equally subservient to the final end of the history in reference to each: first, as rendering the arrival of the bridegroom at last, which takes place while both were still asleep, and consequently still unconscious of, and still unprepared for, any such event, a common surprise to each; and secondly, by contrasting the security of the one, against the effects of a common surprise, by virtue of the precaution which they had adopted before they went asleep, which made them liable to the surprise—with the insecurity of the other, who had fallen asleep indeed, supposing themselves to be as much in readiness for the coming of the bridegroom,

at any time, as their companions, but awake to find themselves destitute of the necessary qualification for that readiness, just at the moment when it is wanted.

The actual arrival of the bridegroom takes place at midnight: a time when sleep is the soundest, and consequently the occurrence of any event, which presupposes the exercise of vigilance and attention, in order to be prepared for it, is least to be anticipated. This circumstance, therefore, contributes in its order to the effect of the surprise in question. But with respect to the supposition itself—it is a critical distinction, approaching to the extreme verge, yet confined within the strict limits of propriety, that a ceremony, which ought to have begun in the evening, but had been deferred, apparently indefinitely, beyond its usual time, is yet actually consummated at midnight.

His arrival is preceded or accompanied by a cry^e—a very natural and characteristic circumstance of the tumultuous joy and festivity which might be expected to distinguish the progress of a nuptial procession through the public streets, and to notify its approach; and which, in the present instance, may justly be presumed to have proceeded from the personal train of friends and attendants of the other

^e Harmer mentions, vol. i. 211. chap. iii. Obs. xxi. from sir John Chardin, that “ in the Indies the parts of the night are
“ made known as well by instruments (of music) in great cities,
“ as by the rounds of the watchmen; who with cries, and small
“ drums, give them notice that a fourth part of the night is
“ passed.” Such cries must needs awake those that were previously asleep.

sex, with which the principal party in a nuptial solemnity, coming to receive his bride, and to conduct her from her own home to his, would ordinarily be surrounded. The direct effect of this cry is to awake the virgins from their slumbers, by calling on them to come forth, and unite the nuptial train of the bride with the retinue of the bridegroom; that so both might proceed in conjunction to the house where the nuptial feast was to be kept. And as the arrival of the bridegroom, until this time, appears to have been unusually procrastinated; so the course of the ceremony from this time forward, seems to be marked by more than ordinary quickness and dispatch. The words of command addressed from without to the company of virgins within, “The bridegroom is coming: come ye forth to meet him,” are expressive of haste and expedition. This too is a natural circumstance in the conclusion of a ceremony, which had been previously deferred beyond its proper time; and by leaving no room for the adoption of precautions, at this stage of the consummation, which might have been neglected until then; it conspires with every other particular to heighten the effect of the surprise, and to promote the proper moral of the history.

It appears from the language of the foolish virgins, when assigning a reason for requesting from their companions a portion of the oil which they had prepared in reserve—“Give to us from your oil; because our lamps are beginning to go out;” (*αἱ λαμπάδες ἡμῶν σβέννυνται*)—that the lamps of the foolish virgins, and we may presume those of the wise ones also, had continued to burn with the original supply

of oil, up to the critical moment when they were wanted ; but were beginning to fail for the first time then. The meaning of these words is, that their lamps had begun to be extinguished, but were not quite extinct ; that they had begun to go out, but were not yet gone. Hence, though the lamps of the wise virgins must have been discovered in the same situation—it was easy for them, having a supply of oil at hand, to pour a little more into them, and to revive the flame as effectually as ever ; which the parable calls, “trimming their lamps :” but the lamps of their companions, which were on the point of being extinguished already, without an additional supply from some other quarter, would soon be entirely dead.

It was natural, therefore, that not being provided with the means of this supply themselves, and the occasion being urgent and requiring it immediately, if they were to retain their place in the nuptial solemnity—they should turn to their companions in their distress, and ask to borrow of them a little of the oil from their vessels. But it was not reasonable that the ultimate advantage of a precaution, which though equally necessary to the foolish, and equally possible to them, had been neglected while it was practicable, should be enjoyed by any but those to whose wisdom and foresight the precaution was due. Besides which, and as a still more cogent reason for refusing their request—in the provision which the wise virgins had made, their œconomy had been shewn, as well as their foresight—and the oil which they had taken in reserve, was no more than sufficient for themselves. To have shared it with their companions, would have been to render it insufficient

for them all, and to endanger the place and privilege in the nuptial attendance, of all : so that under the circumstances of the case, the refusal of the wise to give away any part of their oil, was just as natural, and just as prudential, as the request of that favour by the foolish.

The only alternative, then, which might seem to be left to the foolish virgins, was that suggested by their wiser companions—to go and procure it for themselves, where it was likely to be found ; viz. from those that sold it. And as this was the only expedient, which, under the circumstances of the case, seemed likely to answer the end in view ; so, had there been time to carry it into effect, it might have repaired their previous omission, and remedied the consequences of their original imprudence. But the procession of the bridegroom was at hand, when they discovered their omission, and were made sensible of their imprudence ; and to go to the shops to buy, and to return provided with what they wanted, would take up time for a very different purpose, where not a moment was to be spared from the purpose of attending on the bride. The very expedient, then, which under the circumstances of their situation appeared to be the only one left, with the probable chance of retrieving the consequences of a past error to themselves, would prove in the end to have rendered these consequences but the more inevitable. This very expedient would turn out to be a preposterous remedy—too late in its occurrence to obviate the effects of an oversight, once committed ; in its own nature the reverse of the prospective contrivance of their wiser companions,

and just as characteristic of folly in being adopted at the time when the evil to be avoided, was close at hand, as in having been neglected before, when it was yet remote, and capable of being guarded against.

The arrival of the bridegroom, then, just at the moment when the unwise virgins have set out upon their errand, besides being a circumstance naturally to be expected from the previous course of things—is strikingly conducive to the moral effect of the narrative. It was a consequence of their departure, at such a time, that upon the actual coming of the bridegroom's party, none were left in attendance on the bride, and in a state of readiness to bear their part in the nuptial procession, from her home to his, but the wiser portion of the company; and none being ready at the time to join in the nuptial procession, but these, none could accompany it to the house where the nuptial feast was to be celebrated, none could be admitted into that house in quality of the guests at that feast, and none could ultimately partake of the feast—but these.

The separation, then, which takes place first at this point of time, (a point of time determined by the actual arrival of the bridegroom,) between one part of the same company, and the other—all of them previously waiting for, and expecting the bridegroom in common, all of them previously having the same personal interest in the event of his coming, and the same personal inducement to wait for and expect it—is a separation of the wise as such from the unwise as such; that is, of one part from the other, according to the difference of the

personal characters of each. It is a separation which, notwithstanding its effects in discriminating between the personal fortunes of its subjects respectively at last, is due to the difference of their personal conduct before ; and being no more than the necessary consequence of the different use of means and opportunities, equally in the power of both, and equally left to their own discretion, it is after all only the just personal retribution which prudence or imprudence of conduct, in the same situation, the right or the wrong use of similar means and opportunities, under circumstances equally favourable for either, are liable at all times, and may be expected in the end, to suffer.

The entering in of both the bridal parties, with such of the friends and attendants of each, as were present at the time ; the closing of the door, immediately afterwards, against all besides ; the consequent impossibility of procuring admission, and therefore of partaking in the nuptial festivity, to which any, not already within, whether they had been previously invited or not, became thenceforward subject ; the probability that the door, whose closing is mentioned, was the smaller or private gate, through which the principal parties, with their immediate friends and attendants, were wont to be admitted on such occasions, are points which we had reason to explain elsewhere, as characteristic circumstances in the celebration of eastern weddings, or of entertainments in the East in general ^f. The most important observation which we have to make upon them at present, is, that all these things

^f *Supra* vol. iii. 450—452.

take effect during the continued absence of the improvident virgins, indeed—who are consequently among the number of those excluded—but only so long before their actual return as to be followed directly by it. They find, then, upon their arrival, the door shut; a clear intimation both that the nuptial parties were each within, and that the nuptial feast was already begun: they find themselves without, and consequently their exclusion certain, and the loss of the privilege of guests which they had hitherto supposed themselves to possess, irrecoverable; and all this, by being but a little too late. The folly of their original imprudence, in neglecting a certain precaution when it was as possible, as it was adviseable, to have adopted it; the absurdity of that preposterous wisdom, which is first awakened to the necessity of contriving when the power of executing is past; the true praise and salutary consequences of that wary and vigilant forecast, which is never to be found unprepared, but contemplates and provides long before for every possible emergency, could not have been more strikingly illustrated than by this result.

As then the conduct of the unwise virgins, from the time of the discovery of their imprudence, resembled the behaviour of those who were labouring to retrieve the effects of a previous error, when it was too late; so the rest of their conduct from this point of time, upon finding the door shut, resembles the behaviour of those who have discovered by experience that their efforts have been in vain, and in default of a better, are beginning to trust to a desperate and precarious chance. The rule of proceeding in such cases must have been too well

understood by them not to know, that as they had been too late to enter in along with the rest of the company, they had no right to expect, nor, generally speaking, any reason to calculate, upon admission at this period of the solemnity. Yet they are described as coming and knocking at the door, and saying, "Lord! Lord! open unto us." We may presume, therefore, that what they knew they could no longer claim as a right, they were venturing to ask as a favour; and consequently were trusting for the success of their application, not to the reason of the thing, to the merits of their suit, or to the justice of the party addressed, but to his good-nature and compassion. If so, their very request was a condemnation of themselves, and an admission that they had deserved the evil from which they sought to be relieved.

But the answer of the bridegroom from within might naturally be expected to refuse their petition; and under the circumstances of the case, there was much more reason to deny it, than to listen to it. These, as part of the friends or companions of the bride, in particular, might not be personally known to himself; in which case his reply, taken in the exact meaning of its terms, would be literally true; and their application for admission would appear the request of strangers, who could not without impertinence, intrude into a ceremony, which nowise concerned them. But whether they were personally known to himself or not, and whether they once had a right to expect admission or not—as the attendants of the bride—it was clear that their privilege had been forfeited, by their absence at the time of her nuptial procession. To have opened the door to any part even of the proper train and retinue of

the bride, who had not been ready to attend her, when their personal service was necessary to pay her honour, and to reflect dignity upon the celebrity of her nuptial procession—would have been an undeserved indulgence to them, and an injury done to the rest; and would have left the bridegroom open to the implication, that it was indifferent in his opinion, whether due honour and respect had been paid to his bride by her personal friends, or not; and that the wisdom and foresight, the vigilance and fidelity, exerted in her behalf, by some of her friends, were not more praiseworthy in his opinion, or more entitled to his gratitude and acknowledgment, than the folly and thoughtlessness, the indolence and supineness, or the neglect of duty which had been displayed by others. The request of the foolish virgins, then, could not be conceded by the bridegroom, without a manifest injustice to the wise, and a clear intimation that the principal personage, who must exercise the right of admitting or excluding whom he would, as the guests at his own nuptial feast, was indifferent on whom his choice fell, or whether they deserved well of himself and of his bride, or not. It is consequently refused; and the sentence of exclusion entailed upon the refusal, becomes irrevocable in the case of the foolish virgins—to which result, the account of their request itself, and indeed the continuation of their history in particular, after that of the wise virgins had ceased, were doubtless intended to conduct.

THE MORAL.

The design and tendency of the above representation, as conducing to one result, the effect of its cir-

cumstances taken collectively, may be briefly described as follows: Out of a certain number of persons, designated as a company of virgins, all invited beforehand to the same nuptial festivity, and all waiting in common, with an equal expectation of partaking in it—to shew how it came to pass that one part lost their privilege of guests, and the other retained it to the end. The cause of this unexpected issue of things is resolvable into the fact, that the coming of the bridegroom which determined the precise point of time when the celebration of the nuptial feast was to begin, was later than had been expected by any of the company, collected to receive him; and consequently happened at a time when it must have been unforeseen to them all. But one part had adopted a precaution which was calculated to meet this contingency; the other had neglected to do so. One part, therefore, was prepared for his arrival at the moment when it took place; the rest had their preparations to make: one part was ready to accompany his nuptial procession, as soon as their presence was required; the rest were necessarily left behind. One part, therefore, would obtain admission into the house where the nuptial feast was to be celebrated, as soon as the procession reached it; the rest would be excluded from it, by the same act which admitted them: after which, the privilege of guests at the feast, became inalienably secured to the one, and irrecoverably lost to the other.

Now as all this was the effect of an original oversight on the part of those who are described as suffering from its consequences at last; an oversight committed at the outset of the business, but not discovered until the end of it; an oversight which was

not discovered, while its probable consequences might have been guarded against, and was found out at last only when it was too late to repair its effects: it is manifest that such a representation, even though allegorical in other respects, was adapted to lead to a certain practical and moral inference, concerning the duty and expediency of being always on the guard against surprise; that is, to the doctrine of vigilance or watchfulness in general. Nor is such a practical application inconsistent with the nature of an allegory: for the application, even in such cases, is not the result of the allegory, but of the matter of fact adumbrated thereby. A parabolic allegory is a concealed prophetic history of some kind or other; and if that history is such as to supply no moral and practical inference, the allegory supplies none; if otherwise, the allegory through the matter of fact of which it is the vehicle, conduces to it. For example; let the subject of the parabolic allegory in the present instance, be the future coming of Christ in general, to call every nominal member of his church, to his individual account—setting forth the certainty of the fact of that coming, while it illustrates the uncertainty of the time of it, by such a representation as the above; the necessity of being always on the watch, to be always prepared for such an event, is the direct moral and practical consequence, with reference to all who are personally concerned in that coming, deducible from it.

It appears accordingly from the epimythion, or final observation subjoined by the Speaker to his own narrative, in the words of verse 13, that the preceding history was either expressly designed, or naturally adapted, to recommend the duty of vigilance,

with such an object, and upon such grounds. “Wake ye, or watch ye, therefore,” which is the practical inference from the narrative; “because ye know not the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of man is coming;” which is the ground of the inference, placing the necessity of being always on the watch, against such an event as the coming of the Son of man, on the uncertainty of the time when it may happen, combined with the certainty of the fact that it must sometime happen ^g.

^g The generality of the commentators on the prophecy upon the mount, appear to be of opinion that the moral of the parable of the wise and the foolish virgins is to be sought for in the doctrine of the approaching coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem; in which case, it might inculcate on the hearers the duty of watchfulness, but solely for the sake of avoiding the evils impending on their unbelieving countrymen, and solely for the benefit of the Hebrew Christians, as the persons exclusively concerned in the observance of the injunction. Perhaps there is no better reason, *a priori*, for this opinion, than the circumstance that the parable is inserted in the midst of a discourse, consisting mainly of prophetic matter, and that matter, in a great measure, relating to the future visitation of the Jews. But it has been shewn that there is much besides in the same discourse, which, however naturally deducible, on the principle of association, from this topic, embraces disclosures much more remote in the prospect, much more comprehensive in the scope, and much more generally concerning in the application, than the particular visitation of the Jews. The place of the parable in the order of the discourse, would be presumptively an argument that it belongs to the number of these ulterior, though kindred topics, rather than to the prior and original subject from which they took their rise.

The words which our Saviour himself subjoins to the parable, at verse 13, shew it to be designed with a specific reference to some future coming of Christ; the fact of which was to be looked upon as certain, the time of the fact was left uncertain. This coming may just as reasonably be understood of a coming

But the moral of the parable, considered even in this point of view, is not to inculcate the duty of

of Christ in person, as of a coming not in person; and if there is good ground for expecting such a coming of Christ in person, some time or other, however near or however remote, perhaps more so. Compared with either of those personal advents of Christ, which scripture gives us reason to expect, the advent which precedes the establishment of his personal kingdom on earth, and the advent to the general judgment of the last day, the coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, might be a coming of Christ *ἐν δυνάμει*, but it could not be so, *ἐν παρουσίᾳ*—whereas a coming of Christ in person, must be one in both.

If the parable indeed is to be considered allegorical in its structure, like the rest of its proper class, it would be the most incongruous of all suppositions, that an event like the celebration of a marriage festivity, the most joyous and pleasing of the images of social life, should be regarded as the type of one of the most disastrous and melancholy occurrences which the world had yet witnessed, or should ever witness; and that the character and agency of the bridegroom, the principal party in the celebration of a marriage festivity, should stand for the character and agency of Christ, whether open or concealed, as the minister of vengeance upon the impenitent and unbelieving Jews.

On this principle, too, the company of virgins who are supposed to be assembled together in common about the person of the bride, and waiting beforehand in common for the coming of the bridegroom, must stand as the representatives of the Jewish community in the complex, or of the Christian portion of it in particular. If of the former, what becomes of the common expectation of the coming of the bridegroom, in which both classes of the virgins partook alike? if of the latter, what becomes of the distinction of wise and unwise among the virgins themselves? The Christian portion of the Jewish community might be prepared to expect the coming of Christ in due time, for the visitation on their country; but the unbelieving part could not possibly be so: and as to the distinction between one part of the virgins and the rest, it was due to the fact that, in a common expectation of the coming of the bridegroom *some time*, one part had adopted a precaution which made them ready

simple vigilance, or of what is properly to be understood by the term. Had that been the case, the

for his coming at *any time*, the other part had not ; to which distinction, what analogy can be found in the case of the Hebrew Christians generally, as forewarned of the coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem, and agreeing beforehand in the expectation of that event ? unless it can be shewn that a part of them neglected to do something, naturally arising out of that expectation, and necessary to give effect to the benefit of the warning in their own behalf, which the remainder did not : that a part therefore were prepared for the event when it happened, but the rest were not ; that a part consequently were involved in the consequences of not being prepared for it when it happened, while the rest escaped them.

In fact, the only point of view in which this parable could be regarded, so as to avoid these inconsistencies, yet to make it bear upon the general argument of the prophecy, would be that of a simple moral example, inculcating the expediency of being on the watch, under any circumstances and for any purpose, provided some evil consequence might thereby be avoided, which otherwise was liable to be incurred. There might be so far an analogy between the case of the virgins, waiting for such an event as the arrival of the bridegroom in the parable, and that of the Hebrew Christians, waiting in expectation of the coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem, each with a view to certain personal consequences from the event itself ; that the example of the former might be proposed to the latter, on the principle of a warning, rather than an encouragement, lest something should happen to them, in consequence of their sloth and supineness, with regard to the event which they were to expect, like what was seen to befall the unwise virgins, through their improvidence and neglect, with respect to the coming of the bridegroom.

But a moral analogous to this, it has been shewn, may be deducible from the parable, supposing it strictly prophetic, and consequently allegorical, throughout. In the mean time, that the parable is not a simple moral example—that it is, and was always, designed to be figurative in its structure—that the material image itself—the celebration of the marriage festivity—is

wise virgins, whose conduct supplies the example of this vigilance, could not have been described as fall-

the standing parabolic metaphor for the state of reward and retribution hereafter, proposed to the faith and obedience of Christians in a state of probation here, may be justly inferred from the analogy of the two parables of the great supper, and of the wedding-garment, respectively, which so closely resemble this. That the character of the bridegroom in particular was from the first intended to represent our Saviour Jesus Christ, may be shewn by a comparison of the parable, from verse 10 to the end of the account, with Luke xiii. 23—30, the answer to the question, *εἰ ὀλίγοι οἱ σωζόμενοι*. This passage of St. Luke's Gospel was considered at large, vol. iii. 449—459. I refer to it at present, to remind the reader, that with a mixture of historical simplicity, it contained a predominance of strictly allegorical matter, which might naturally have been wrought into a parable like the present, and even as it stands, substantially agrees with the conclusion of the parable of the virgins, and is only more circumstantially expressed. And this is no doubt one of the reasons why St. Luke, who had already recorded that answer, omits this parable in his account of the prophecy on the mount. The historical matter, mixed up with the allegorical in the above instance, resides in the words supposed to be addressed to the master of the house by his excluded guests, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." The person to whom such words could be addressed, under any circumstances, must be our Saviour; they by whom they could be addressed to him, must at least be believers in him, and believers, properly speaking, of his own day. Nor indeed is it possible to compare Luke xiii. 26, 27, in the account of what is supposed to pass, on this occasion, between the master of the house and these excluded guests—and Matt. vii. 22, 23, in the account of what our Lord declares shall be said to him by many nominal Christians, and shall be answered by himself in return, at the day of doom; and not perceive that the language of the two accounts is almost *verbatim* the same, its substance and purport one, and therefore the occasions the same also; the Master of the house, in St. Luke's description—is the Judge of Christians in St.

ing asleep before the coming of the bridegroom, as well as the foolish ones ; and consequently, strictly speaking, as taken off their guard, at the time, by that event, as much as their companions. The nature of the vigilance must be collected from the kind of instance in which it is exerted ; and the nature of that instance must be estimated according to the circumstances and situation of the parties in whose behaviour both the vigilance and the quality opposed to it, are respectively illustrated. Tried by this criterion, it will appear that the vigilance is entitled to that name, only as it agrees to the idea of watchfulness in general, and therefore of simple watchfulness—as the effect of a common principle of conduct, a prudent foresight, a timely circumspection, an heedful providence against danger and surprise—whatever be the particular emergency which may render these things necessary.

The personal relation of all but the principal parties concerned in the parabolic representation, was manifestly that of the friends and companions of one or other of these parties, in the solemnity of their

Matthew's ; the excluded guests in St. Luke—are nominal Christians in St. Matthew ; the occasion of the solemnity in the one, is the day of doom in the other ; and the feast celebrated with a certain company, is the entering into the kingdom of heaven. And these things being true of the allegorical description, Luke xiii. 23—30, they must be equally true of the parable, which so nearly resembles it ; and consequently, if that description was allegorical in every thing relating to the occasion, the master, the guests, and the like—the parable must be so too, in every thing relating to the corresponding parts of itself ; and the key to the interpretation of the one must be the key to that of the other.

nuptial union, and of every thing which preceded that event. The duty incumbent upon them, was consequently that of being always in readiness to attend upon the principal personages, and to bear their proper part, as the subordinate personages, in a ceremony like that of their nuptial union; which so far was the duty of persons invested with a certain responsibility. The vigilance incumbent upon them, would consequently be the vigilance incumbent upon those, who were bound by their place and relation to be always prepared to discharge the duties of a certain station—to acquit themselves of a certain responsibility. To this general idea of the duty, it would be indifferent in what the instance of the vigilance consisted—or when it was first to be exerted; provided the effect of it were still the same, to qualify the subject for the discharge of the obligations of his particular duty, at one time as much as at another; and consequently at all times alike.

Now the idea of a vigilance of this kind cannot possibly be confounded with the simple idea of keeping awake, or watching; but it will come up to the notion of that complex virtue, which, in allusion to the simple quality—as resembling it in the general principle, and the material part of its nature, however different in its specific character, and the manner and extent of its operation—we have called the virtue of Christian watchfulness. The moral application of the parable, therefore, is to inculcate the duty of Christian watchfulness. But Christian watchfulness is the one thing necessary to Christian responsibility. The doctrine of Christian watchfulness is therefore the doctrine of Christian responsi-

bility; and the parabolic illustration which applies to the former, must apply also to the latter.

Now the doctrine of Christian responsibility is, in other words, the doctrine of an œconomy of probation, begun, and continued while it lasts, on Christian principles, and characteristic of the constitution of the present visible church; which by its practical effects in discriminating asunder one portion of the members of the present visible church from another, prepares for the final transition of the visible into the invisible church. None but those who are subjected to a state of probation on Christian principles, beforehand, can be liable to be called to account on Christian principles, at last; which liability is to be denominated their Christian responsibility: and none but those who are liable to such an account, can have occasion for such a virtue as Christian vigilance, to be always prepared for that account. The doctrine of Christian vigilance, then, is an infallible criterion of the doctrine of Christian probation—out of which it springs, as the great practical inference founded upon it, and from which it differs only as a consequent from its antecedent, or as an effect from its cause. Hence, if the parable was either expressly intended, or naturally adapted, to illustrate and enforce this practical inference, it must presuppose the state of the case, in which it is founded; and if it enforced the inference by virtue of the history recorded in the narrative, that history must be a case in point to the doctrine on which the inference is founded. On this principle, the allegorical representation contained in the parable, will be a figurative representation of the scheme of Christian probation—a figurative illustration of the doctrine of

Christian responsibility: a conclusion which we shall find to be a clue to the interpretation of all its circumstances^h.

^h Among the other arguments which would lead to the above conclusion, one is the declared subject of comparison with the history, (that is, the history in the complex, recorded in the parable,) the mention of which is premised in this instance; “the kingdom of heaven.” The various senses of this phrase were explained in the General Introduction, chapter x. and it was there shewn, that under all its modifications of meaning, the idea which predominates throughout is that of the Gospel dispensation, considered as a state of probation transacted on Christian principles in this life, preparatory to a state of retribution critically adapted to the claims of Christian desert, in the literal enjoyment of a kingdom of heaven, in another life. To this complex signification of the phrase, especially when premised as the object of comparison to the parabolic history ensuing, regarded in the complex also, nothing, it is manifest, was so well adapted to answer, as an entire view of the scheme of Christian probation, the general doctrine of Christian responsibility, allegorically represented by the history in question. On this principle, the analogy between the things compared, would be the closest imaginable, and so complete as to be almost the comparison of the same thing with itself.

Again, it is superfluous to remind the reader that the detail of things in the parable was so strictly confined to what we called the nuptial preparation—that though it began with the earliest point of time at which the nuptial preparation could be supposed to begin, it broke off at the moment, when, had the narrative been any longer continued, the account of the nuptial preparation must have passed into that of the nuptial consummation. Now what is the nuptial preparation—considered as preliminary to the nuptial consummation—if both are divested of the figurative language under which their meaning is disguised, but the œconomy of probation, such as we defined and described in the ninth chapter of the General Introduction—preparatory to the œconomy of retribution which succeeds to it, and carries the end designed by it into effect? The nuptial consummation

could not ensue within the period embraced by the action of a parable, which confined itself to the nuptial preparation: neither can the œconomy of retribution begin within the period devoted to the being and probation of the visible church, in its present state. Yet both the nuptial preparation beforehand, and the nuptial consummation at last, were equally connected with the celebration of one and the same marriage festivity—as the œconomy of probation previously, and the œconomy of retribution ultimately, are with the enjoyment of the same Christian reward.

The scheme of Christian probation, the doctrine of Christian responsibility, appears, in fact, to be so exclusively the subject-matter and final end of the parabolic representation in the present instance; that the particular class of moral agents to whose situation the representation was intended to apply, and whose case we must suppose the Speaker of the parable to have had in view, at the time, are to be considered all who agree in the common character of Christians, and in the common circumstance of being subjected to an œconomy of probation on Christian principles. The members of the visible church, it is true, as composing its entire congregation, are every where divisible into two, but only two, classes, the ministers of religion, and the people; and an allegorical representation immediately preceded this parable, extending from verse 45 of Matthew xxiv. to the end of the chapter, which the explanation of its particulars, as it first occurred, Luke xii. 42—46. abundantly proved to be specially applicable to the peculiar probation and responsibility of the ministers of religion, in contradistinction to the people. But this division is taken from a circumstance of distinction confined to a few among the complex of the same body, which opposes them to the rest; and thereby imposes a special character upon them in one respect, while they agree with the rest of the body in every other. Every minister of religion is necessarily a Christian, and a member of the congregation of the visible church; though every Christian and member of the congregation of the visible church is not a minister of religion. Every representation, then, which applies to the existing moral relations of Christians as Christians, must also be applicable to those of the ministers of religion, if they are not specially distinguished from each other; though the converse would not be

THE INTERPRETATION.

In the first place, the period of the espousals must have been over, when the time of the bridal solemnity was come; but the celebration of a marriage at last implied the formation of the nuptial contract between the parties previously. In like manner the future union between Christ and his church must have been contemplated from all eternity, though it can be consummated only in the fulness of time; and from whatever time it began to be contemplated,

the case, that every representation applicable to the existing relations of the ministers of religion, unless specially distinguished to the contrary, would be applicable to those of all Christians.

The particle of time, (*τότε*), which connects the beginning of this chapter, with the end of the last, must be referred either to the beginning or to the close of the parabolic allegory just preceding; that is, either to the point of time denoted by Matt. xxiv. 45, or to that denoted by xxiv. 51.—between which the connection is such that the one refers to the first commencement, the other to the close and consummation, of one and the same intermediate œconomy, specially applicable, as we have seen, to the particular probation and particular responsibility of the ministers of religion: the former determined by the departure of Christ from the government of his church in person, the latter by his return to take cognizance of it again. In this case, the object of the reference in what follows, to what has just preceded, will be to shew, that at either of the periods in question, whether that of the departure, or that of the return of Christ, in person—the same event should produce effects upon the Christian world in general, analogous to what the parabolic allegory just recited, shewed it to have produced with respect to the ministers of religion in particular. The parable then which follows, was intended to be as applicable to the moral probation and moral responsibility of all who agreed in the character of Christians in general, as the parabolic allegory which had preceded, to those of the ministers of religion in particular.

from the same time the nuptial contract between the church and her future Lord might be said to have been formed and taken effect.

The bridegroom, as one of the principal parties concerned in the supposed celebration of a marriage, had a proper part and agency assigned to him in the parable; but the bride, though the party correlative to the bridegroom, had not; the reason of which distinction must now begin to appear. For the marriage supposed to be solemnized between them, being the consummation of the union of Christ and his true church, whensoever that takes place; this union is not really, but metaphorically the union of parties joined together in the estate of marriage; in relation to which kind of union, the bridegroom and the bride as such, must be both as figurative and both as mystical, as the union which takes place between them. But the bridegroom, besides his figurative character in relation to a figurative solemnity, has a real character in his relation of the Head of the church; the bride, as the representative of the communion of faithful believers in the abstract, whose union with their Lord and Master is adumbrated by that of a wife with her husband, has no real or personal character, in any sense, but is a figurative or mystical personage throughout.

The œconomy of the parable was strictly confined to the nuptial preparation; and the nuptial preparation, beginning with the arrival of the nuptial evening, extended to the verge of the nuptial consummation: and the œconomy of probation, which answers to it, considered as that proper state of trial in which Christians, as Christians, are placed in this life, be-

gan with the Gospel dispensation or first promulgation of Christianity, and must continue until the time appointed for the œconomy of retribution ; which is in fact for the duration of the Gospel dispensation, and coextensively with the existence of the visible church. The beginning of that period in the parable was defined by the first going forth of the virgins to meet the bridegroom ; its end by the arrival of the bridegroom himself : as the beginning of the scheme of Christian probation was defined by the overt publication of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost, followed by the overt formation of a Christian society, the first of its kind ; its close will be determined by the return of Christ himself. The whole of that period was an interval of preparation for the marriage solemnity, and an interval of expectation of the coming of the bridegroom : as the whole of the present œconomy of the trial of Christians is a period of constant preparation for one and the same œconomy of their retribution, and of constant expectation of the same coming of Christ, to close the one, and to usher in the other. The coming of the bridegroom was expected at the very beginning of that period, but did not take place until the very end of it : as the return of Christ in person began to be expected by the church from the moment of his departure in person, and yet it has not yet taken place. There was a probability that the bridegroom would appear at the usual time, and yet a possibility that his coming might be delayed to an unusual time : and with respect to the return of Christ, after his departure in person—the fact only of that event having been certainly predicted, not the time—it might take place early, and it might

take place late ; and it might be expected early, (as indeed we know it to have been,) and it might be expected late : but it must take place sometime, however long it may be delayed previously, and therefore it must be expected sometime ; and however long it continues to be still delayed, so long it must continue to be still expected.

The bride in the mystical ceremony of the union of the true church with Christ, being the representative of the communion of faithful believers in the abstract—the friends and attendants of this bride, described as a company of virgins, are the congregation of believers in Christ, who compose the church ; the relation between whom and Christ is that of the members and the Head of one and the same society. These virgins go forth, as the friends and retinue of the bride in her approaching nuptial procession, and as the guests invited to the consequent nuptial feast ; and therefore though the members of the church of Christ, they are first and properly the members of the present and visible, not yet of the future and invisible church. They go forth on their errand with the first arrival of the nuptial evening, and therefore with the first expectation of being wanted to attend in the train of the bride : as the making of converts to Christianity, and the formation of Christian societies on Christian principles, and subject to the discipline of a Christian probation, bear date almost from the very moment of the personal departure of the Head of the church, and the first beginning of the consequent expectation of his return, to take cognizance of what has transpired in the œconomy of his church in his absence. The place *from* which they went forth,

could not be the same with the place *to* which they went forth on their errand; the former was probably their own homes, the latter the home of the bride: and Christian converts to the Gospel, whether obtained from the bosom of the Jewish, or from that of any Gentile community, yet as placed by themselves within the pale of the Christian church, and forming by their union the complex of a distinct spiritual society, agreeing with themselves, but differing from all others, in such and such respects—may be said to have belonged to one community before their conversion, and to another after it; to have lived among Jews or Gentiles, without the pale of the church at one time, and apart from Jews or Gentiles, within the pale of Christianity at another. The purpose for which they repaired to the home of the bride, was to wait there for the coming of the bridegroom, and to discharge about the person of the bride, before and after that event, such duties as became her personal friends and attendants: and the purpose for which converts of every description were alike made to the Gospel, and incorporated in the body of the same Christian church, was that they might undergo in their capacity of Christians, and within the pale of the Christian church, whatever trial and probation was necessary beforehand to qualify the members of the present and visible church, on the grounds of a proper desert, to become the members of the future and invisible church. The virgins assembled in that house, consequently, formed together but one company, collected for a common purpose, and bearing in common the name of the friends and attendants of the bride; as the members of the visible church of Christ, wheresoever

existing, constitute together the congregation of one catholic or universal church, all bearing alike the common name of Christians, all subject alike to the proper discipline and probation of Christians, all bound alike to the exercise of the same proper virtue, the virtue of Christian vigilance, peculiar to the probation of Christians. The virgins had all been invited to the same entertainment beforehand, and all looked forward to partaking in the same entertainment at last ; and all were capable of partaking in it beforehand, whether all actually partook in it, at last, or not : and in like manner all members of the visible church, are capable beforehand of becoming members of the invisible church ; all Christians are placed in the same state of probation here, with a view to the same personal results to themselves in a state of retribution hereafter ; all are called in one hope of their calling ; the reward of their faith and obedience which is proposed to any, is proposed to all, and if attainable by any is attainable by all : and though every professing member of the church in its present state, may not become a member of the church in its future state, yet none will become members of the church in its future and resulting state, who have not first been members of it in its present and preparatory state.

One part of this company of virgins was distinguished by an opposition of personal character from the rest ; and this distinction was general—there being none of the number, who was not reducible under one or other of the classes, so discriminated asunder. The principle of this opposition was resolvable into the circumstance that all being situated alike, and

having the same duty to discharge by virtue of that situation—the obligation to which duty, whensoever it might be required, was positive and certain, the time when they might be called upon to perform it was indefinite and uncertain—one part of the number had adopted a precaution from the first, by means of which they could depend on being always in a state of readiness for the performance of the duty, the other part had neglected it. The consequent distinction between one part of the same company and the rest, entailed by this circumstance from the first, was that of those who had an eye to the discharge of the duty of their station under all circumstances, and that of those who had not; that of those who looked to its performance later than might be expected, and at an unusual time, as well as early, and at the proper time, and that of those who did not; that of those who were desirous to be ready to perform it at one time, as much as at another—that is, at all times alike, and had taken their measures accordingly—and that of those who were not. In like manner, if Christians, as members of the visible church, are all placed in the same state of probation—and all subject to the obligation of the same duty of Christian vigilance, the only proper virtue of those who are placed in a state of probation on Christian principles, preparatory to a state of retribution accommodated to it, on the principle of reward as apportioned to desert; no distinction of character will comprehend them all, and discriminate them asunder, yet arise so naturally out of the community of situation in which they are placed, as the distinction of those who live in the habitual exercise of this virtue, and of those who do

not ; the distinction of those who live with the same constant sense of their Christian responsibility, and therefore in the same constant practice of their duty of Christian vigilance, and of those who do not ; the distinction, in short, of those who live up to their conviction of the personal interest of every moral agent in a preliminary state of probation, which is, to be prepared for a subsequent state of retribution—and whatever be the duties of their place and station, knowing that they must be called upon sometime to give an account of them, and may be at any time—who are anxious to qualify themselves for rendering this account at all times, by attending to the performance of those duties at all times ; and the distinction of those who are not.

It followed from this difference of personal character, founded in the difference of personal conduct, among the members of the same body, that a part of them were to be called wise, and a part of them foolish—the essence of wisdom being to contemplate future and possible contingencies, as well as present appearances ; that of folly to overlook them, and to see nothing beyond the present : and in the complex of the body of professing believers, all comprehended within the pale of the same Christian church, and all subject to the same responsibility—some live with a constant sense of their proper situation, and with an eye to their future account, and some do not ; some are real, as well as nominal Christians, others are nominal, but not real ; the one must be called the wise and provident, the rest, the foolish and improvident, among the members of the same Christian congregation, with regard to the possession and exercise of a virtue

which they all stand in need of alike, the virtue of Christian vigilance, arising from the fact of Christian responsibility; the practical benefit and advantage of which is, by a timely circumspection and foresight in the performance of duty here, to guard against the certain consequences of the neglect of duty hereafter. There might be many shades of difference in the personal character of one of the wise virgins, compared with the rest, as well as in the personal character of one of the foolish, compared with another; but taken in the complex, and so contrasted the one with the other, there was none. The wise were equally wise, the foolish were equally foolish; the former by virtue of the adoption of a common precaution, in the exercise of a common foresight; the latter by virtue of its neglect, in the exercise of a common thoughtlessness. And in like manner there may be many shades of distinction between the personal goodness of one Christian, and that of another, and the personal badness of one opposite character, and that of another; yet all the former must agree in being good, and good in the sense of Christian goodness—and all the latter in being bad, in the sense opposed to it; and to whatever extent all the former may agree in being good, in the sense of Christian goodness, they will agree in the possession and exercise of the same virtue of Christian vigilance; to whatever extent all the latter may agree in being bad, in the sense opposed to good, they will agree in the want of the virtue of Christian vigilance, synonymous with Christian goodness, or in the possession of the vice opposed to it. Every kind and degree of Christian goodness is an energy of the same virtue of Christian vigilance; and though the energies of the

virtue of Christian vigilance, like those of any other virtue, may be exerted in one instance to a greater, and in another to a less degree; yet the lowest degree of the exercise of this virtue, which will procure admission into heaven, is so far as competent to its proper effect, as the highest; and the highest degree of the exercise of the virtue does no more than ensure to its proper subject his proper reward.

The situation of the wise virgins, in every thing which did not depend upon themselves, and consequently in every thing external and accidental, was for a time the same with that of the foolish; as the situation of real and nominal Christians, (both being regarded in the light of members of the same visible church, and no more,) is and must be the same; all being subject by their relation of Christians, to the same laws and ordinances, whether moral or positive; all professing the same obedience and observance of them; all acknowledging the same belief, receiving the same scriptures, as the rule of faith and practice, joining in the same ceremonies of external religion, partaking in the same assistances and means of grace, hoping, or professing to hope, for the same reward, and aspiring, or professing to aspire, after the same promises. The wisdom of the wise, and the folly of the foolish virgins, though exerted in their proper effects on the conduct from the first, did not fully appear until the last: nor is the superior wisdom of the real Christian above the nominal, as living with a single eye to the discharge of the duty of his station, and to the rendering of his future particular account—though the same in its principle at one time as at another, and though producing its natural effects through the whole

course of the present life—in the nature of things, capable of being as clearly appreciated, while the state of probation is continuing, as when the period of rendering an account is at hand.

The possession of a lamp, with its ordinary supply of oil, under the circumstances of the case, was the external token of a guest invited to the feast, intended to be celebrated; and the character of an invited guest, upon an occasion like this, it has been often observed, is neither more nor less than the character of a professing member of the visible church. The possession of a lamp, then, which was the external criterion of such a guest, is the possession of whatsoever is necessary to constitute a member of the church, but nothing more; and therefore to the external profession of Christianity: among which requisites, it would be easy to enumerate as the most obvious of the number—admission into the communion of the church by baptism—continuance in it by participation in the holy sacrament—the reception of the Christian Scriptures as the rule of faith and practice—conformity to the rites and usages of the profession of Christianity externally—attendance at public worship, after the forms of the Christian service, at stated times and in stated places, and the like. The possession of lamps, merely, discriminated no part of the same company from the rest; and the external profession of Christianity, consisting in such particulars as have been mentioned, would distinguish none of the members of the church from the rest. The provision of the lamps in the first instance did not appear to depend upon the virgins themselves; and in innumerable

instances the first acquisition of the character of a Christian externally, does not depend upon the subject himself, but is the effect of causes, under which he is passive, and exerts no freewill, or deliberate choice and agency of his own. In any case, the possession of lamps in the first instance, must be attributed to the nature of the occasion, and the time of the night, on which, and at which they were wanted; it being impossible that any could take part in a nuptial procession by night, or go forth abroad for that purpose, without being provided with a lamp: as in the nature of things it is impossible that any can become or continue a Christian, without conforming externally at least to the profession of Christianity, in whatsoever that conformity consists.

The possession of a vessel, on the other hand, containing an extra supply of oil, was the criterion of one, under the same circumstances, who besides being from the first an invited, would become in due time an admitted guest: and an admitted guest is just as much the recognized symbol of a member of the invisible, as an invited one is of a member of the visible church. The possession of a vessel, then, which upon an occasion like this made all the difference between one who was an invited guest beforehand, and was to become an admitted one at last—is the possession of whatsoever is necessary to constitute a member of the invisible church hereafter, in the person of a member of the visible church at present; and therefore, to discriminate the nominal from the real Christian, by the visible difference of personal fortune, in another life, who do not appear to be distinguished by any difference of personal destination, in the present life. This qualifica-

tion may be summarily expressed by whatsoever it is, which enters into the character of a true Christian, over and above the external profession of Christianity, or the mere outward appearance of the character; which being consequently internal, and unseen in the principle, however visible and sensible in the effect, can be nothing in general but the conformity of the life and conduct to the principles of the Christian profession—the belief of whatever is necessary to a right practice, the practice of whatever is the natural consequence of a right belief—and each as peculiarly incumbent on Christians. Expressed in the language of the parable, it would be the possession and exercise of the virtue of Christian watchfulness, over and above the liability to Christian responsibility, as the natural and proper effect of that responsibility: for liability to Christian responsibility is entailed by the external profession of the Christian religion—the energies of Christian watchfulness, as springing out of the consciousness of that liability, are the conformity of the life and conduct to the obligations of the external profession. The provision of these extra vessels of store, was the act of the wise virgins for themselves, while their lamps might have been obtained from some other quarter; as, in the nature of things, the character of the true, in opposition to the nominal Christian, must be as dependent on the concurrence of the subject himself, as the mere external character of Christian may be independent of it. The instance of thoughtfulness which entitled the wise virgins to the name of circumspect and prudent, consisted in the provision of these vessels, over and above their lamps—as left to themselves; and the true wisdom of the real,

above the merely nominal Christian, is shewn in his anxiety to add the essentials of the character, to the accidentals; while the nominal Christian remains content with the latter, regardless of the former. The possession of these vessels, then, not that of the lamps, distinguished one part of the company of virgins as wise, from the other as foolish: and the essentials of the Christian character, which are their own acquisition, subject to the prevention and cooperation of Divine grace—not the accidentals, in which Christians of all kinds are more or less passive, and none of them differs from the rest—distinguish the real Christian from the nominal.

The delay in the time of the actual arrival of the bridegroom, compared with the time when it was first expected, appeared to be something unforeseen; and if the return of Christ, as we know to have been the case, began to be expected by the Christian church as soon as he was gone away, the disappointment of that expectation by his continued absence, notwithstanding, would appear something surprising also. The cause of this unexpected delay was not specified; yet it might have been intended for the production of that very effect, in discriminating asunder the personal character of one part of the virgins from that of the other, to which in the event it is seen to have been subservient: as there can be no doubt, that the personal departure of Jesus Christ, though the Head of the church, into heaven, by which he was removed from its personal cognizance in the present state of its existence on earth, was purposely designed for that scheme of probation, which began upon it, preparatory to that

œconomy of retribution, which will sometime succeed to it ; that by their personal conduct and behaviour as the subjects of an appropriate discipline of trial, adapted to their relations as Christians, the personal character and deserts of all the members of his church, both the truly so, and the nominally, might become manifest, as they ought to become ; that the good might be fully declared, and that the bad might not be hid. Had the coming of the bridegroom taken place when it was first expected, had there been no interval of suspense or waiting, before it happened ; the unwise virgins would have been as well prepared for it as the wise : had nothing been left to the personal sagacity and foresight of the parties themselves, the unwise must have had as good and reasonable an hope of admission to the feast as the wise : and were there no proper trial for Christians, nor consequently any interval necessary to its transaction—were there no need of personal vigilance and personal diligence, to make their calling and election sure ; the case of the nominal would be as favourable to salvation, as that of the real : the external profession of Christianity would be the only thing needful for the reward of the profession, and the acceptance of the nominal Christian must be expected on as good grounds, as that of the real.

If the sleep, into which all the virgins were supposed to fall, before the coming of the bridegroom, was simply the natural effect of the situation in which they were placed, entailing the necessity of waiting for his arrival until a late hour of the night ; its legitimate effect, as we have already observed,

would be merely to make his arrival, when it actually took place, an event which, under the circumstances of the case, neither the wise nor the foolish virgins could have been prepared for at the time; and therefore an equal surprise to both: conformably to which supposition, whensoever the advent of Christ takes place—the futurity of that event only being made known, the time when it is to happen being kept secret—it must take place suddenly and unexpectedly, and in respect to those who are interested in the consequences of the advent, with as little possibility of being discovered by them, or of their becoming aware of it beforehand, as if they were buried in sleep.

But if the sleep in the parable is to be considered a significant circumstance, as much as the rest of the history of the virgins—a supposition on every account to be preferred to the contrary—then it may not unfitly denote the interval between death and the resurrection; partly from the nature of the figure, employed in that sense, itself—that as death is compared in scripture to the act of falling on sleep, and the resurrection to the act of waking out of sleep—the period between these two events, on the principle of a common analogy to both, must be compared to the interval spent in sleep—or to that state of repose, with its natural and sensible effects on the subject, which lasts from the time of his falling asleep, to the time of his awaking again: partly, because sleep in its visible effects upon both the body and the soul of man, while still united, resembles death—and death in its visible effect on the body, which alone remains exposed to the observation of the senses, after the separation of the soul from it, ex-

ternally resembles sleep: and as the act of awaking from the state of sleep is followed by the recovery of the perfect use both of the soul and the body, after being for a time suspended, even when the soul and the body were still really united to each other; so the act of arising from the dead must be followed by the recovery of the same thing, as caused by the actual reunion of what had previously been actually detached asunder, though not by the restoration of what had been previously for a time suspended; between which effects, however, there is a perceptible analogy.

There is so far, then, a conceivable resemblance between the act of dying, and the act of falling asleep; between the act of rising from the dead, and the act of awakening from sleep; and between the intermediate state of the soul after death, before the resurrection, and the state of repose passed in sleep; that the sleep in the parable may answer to the first of these things in its commencement, to the third in its continuance, and to the second in its termination. And, indeed, the arrival of the bridegroom, which puts an end to this sleep, being the arrival of Jesus Christ, and the occasion of his coming being the celebration of his marriage-feast, that is, the consummation of the union between himself and true believers—it must be the arrival of Jesus Christ to judgment; and the arrival of Christ to the judgment must be accompanied, or followed immediately, by the resurrection of the dead; and many as it may find alive upon the earth, it must find still more in the grave, and consequently many more to be raised to life, than actually in being at the time^u.

^u It is no objection to the above suppositions—that if the

Again, the arrival of the bridegroom, after being expected from the beginning of the night takes place at midnight, which is a critical circumstance ; for midnight is the time when sleep is deepest—and what sleep is so deep as the sleep of death? or midnight is the cardinal point between the end of one day and the beginning of another ; as the period of the advent to judgment is the middle stage between the duration of the present, and the commencement of the future state of things—the close of the œconomy of probation, the beginning of the œconomy of retribution—the point where time must end, and eternity must begin. Accordingly, it is an ancient tradition of the church, that the return of Christ which produces these effects, may be expected, when it happens, to take place at midnight^x.

company of virgins in the aggregate, denotes the complex of professing Christians, or the congregation of the visible church in the aggregate also, and consequently at one time, during the period of its existence, as much as at another—the circumstance that all are described as falling asleep before the coming of the bridegroom, and all as awakened out of their sleep by it, would be incompatible with what is revealed in scripture, respecting the fact that some will be found alive even at the time of the advent of Christ to judgment. For though that may be the case, still at no period of the earth's existence, subsequently to the departure and prior to the return of Christ, much less at the end of the present state of things, could the number of the living, considered as the existing members of the visible church, bear any comparison to the number of the dead, considered in the same capacity, as those who have been so ; and the living at the end of the present state of things, not only will not outnumber, but in respect to the common readiness of both either to undergo their trial, or for any purpose, requiring and presupposing their existence at the time, will not *prevent*, the dead.

^x Hieronym. iv. pars i. 120. *ad calc.* in Matthæum xxv : Tra-

The bridegroom is described as arriving at this time surrounded by a personal train of friends and followers; and the advent of Christ to judgment will be accompanied by the host of heaven. His approach is preceded and notified by a cry, which awakens the sleeping virgins; as the coming of Christ in person from heaven again will be ushered in by the archangel's voice, and a trumpet of God, expressly to alarm and arouse the dead. The words of command addressed to the virgins, to come forth to meet the bridegroom, are similar to those which our Lord himself employed, when he commanded Lazarus to come forth from the tomb; and which he intimated to the Jews in his discourse, John v. 25. 28, that he should employ at the end of the world, in bringing about a general resurrection of the dead: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and is now, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they who have heard *it* shall live." And again, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in which all who are in the graves shall hear his voice," (doubtless commanding them to come forth,) "and shall come forth; they who have done good *things*, unto a resurrection of life;

ditio Judæorum est, Christum media nocte venturum in similitudinem Ægyptii temporis . . . unde reor et traditionem Apostolicam permansisse, ut in die vigiliarum Paschæ, ante noctis dimidium, populos dimittere non liceat, exspectantes adventum Christi, et postquam illud tempus transierit, securitate præsumpta, festum cuncti agant diem. The advent of Christ to the destruction of Antichrist, at midnight, is asserted, Lactantius, vii. 19. 648. Epitome, 706: Chrysost. Comm. in Nov. Test. i. 818. A. in Matt. Hom. 78. Perhaps some countenance is given to this opinion not only by the testimony of the present parable, but by the literal construction of Luke xvii. 34.

“ and they who have done evil *things*, unto a resurrection of condemnation.”

This interval of repose, between the falling of all asleep, and the coming of the bridegroom, however dangerous to the ultimate security of their more unwise companions, might obviously be spent by the wise virgins in composure and tranquillity; because they were conscious that they had taken a precaution, in consequence of which, whensoever they might be awakened by the event which they were all expecting, they knew they could not be awakened unseasonably, nor found unprepared with the means of rekindling their lamps, even at a moment's notice: and the interval between death and the resurrection, may be, and, no doubt, is passed in peace and confidence by the good, who have laid up a foundation in store against the time when their works shall follow them, and become manifest before angels and before men.

The trimming of their lamps, then, as an act which ensues upon the awakening of them all, posterior indeed to the arrival of the bridegroom, but preparatory to joining in the nuptial train in the way to the nuptial house; may not unfitly denote that strong and lively recollection of the past life and conduct, that sudden reluming of the conscience, which the Wise Man calls “ the candle of the Lord,” and one of the greatest of our poets, the umpire of God, planted in the breasts of his moral and responsible creatures—which may be expected to take place in the instance of every such moral and responsible agent, whom the resurrection from the dead, and the summons to judgment, shall call to his individual account; and without which in fact, none

could be qualified to render his account, or to answer for every particular circumstance of his former existence, in thought, word, or deed ; as every one in the day of judgment, will be required to answer for himself.

The discovery of their own imprudence by the foolish virgins, and of the superior wisdom and foresight of their companions, to which they had been insensible before, while their lamps were continuing to burn with the original supply of oil, was necessarily made, though for the first time, at this critical moment, when their lamps having gone on burning while they were not required, were beginning to fail, just as they were wanted, and to preserve their flame from utter extinction, needed a speedy supply of oil from some other quarter : as when the external profession of Christianity ceases to continue—that is, when the duration of the merely visible church, and of the œconomy of probation, is at an end, and the transition of the visible into the invisible church is about to take place—those who have never been conscious of the necessity of something more to their personal acceptance with their Lord and Master, than the name and profession of believers in him, or though conscious of it, have shut their eyes to that salutary conviction—cannot remain under the same delusion any longer. They may wilfully disguise from themselves the fact of their dangerous situation, or from a variety of causes they may be blinded to the perception of so disagreeable a truth, in the present life ; but they cannot continue insensible to it, nor avoid the discovery of their danger, even if they would, in the next : and whatsoever cause it may have been which prevented them from making, or indisposed them to profit by so necessary a discovery,

while they were yet in their proper state of trial, with the means and opportunities of working out their own salvation, still graciously provided them, and placed in their power; the obstruction must be removed, the mist which clouded their eyes must be dissipated, when they are standing in the presence of their Judge, and called upon to give an account of that trial, to answer for the use of those means and opportunities themselves.

The discovery of their original oversight, which was consequently now made—the request which they prefer, as the effect of the discovery, for the gift of a little of the oil of their companions—the conduct of the wise virgins in declining that request, and the grounds upon which their refusal is placed—the departure of the foolish, as their only remaining alternative, to procure what they wanted from those who sold, if possible in time to retain their place in the nuptial procession; the consequence of that departure, at the critical juncture when the nuptial procession was close at hand—all which are circumstances so connected together, as to lead to one result, the admission of the wise virgins to the festivity, and the exclusion of the unwise ones from it, at the end of all, after each had been waiting so long in the common expectation of partaking of it, previously—referred to the particulars of such a transaction as the process of the final judgment of Christians, may adumbrate the following truths: first, that nominal Christians, whose lives have never corresponded to the principles and obligations of their profession, shall have nothing to trust to, in the hour of need, but the name and title of Christians; and discovering then for the first time, the

extreme folly of their former inconsistency—the insufficiency and hopelessness of so foolish and desperate a trust—shall vainly lament that they did not imitate the example of their wiser brethren, and profit by the means of salvation, in the day of grace, as they had done.

Again, that the personal fortune and disposal of every Christian at the day of doom, will strictly depend upon his personal conduct in this life. Every one must answer for himself, and stand or fall by his own deserts, and according to his own claims to acceptance. There was not oil enough to divide between the wise and the foolish, and to serve the necessity of both; that is, nothing which Christians, whether nominal or real, in the present state of their probation, possess in common, and might avail themselves of in common, can procure the salvation of either. The external profession of Christianity, and the privileges simply entailed by that profession, would be equally ineffectual for both; and as to the grounds of the personal acceptance of either, distinctly from the other—the utmost which the good can accomplish by all their diligence and all their perseverance, even in their own behalf, is barely sufficient for themselves; much less for any besides. “No man can make atonement for his brother, for it cost more to redeem his own soul; so that he must let that alone for ever.” No man can cause the merit of his own righteousness to be imputed to another; but even to justify his own, and to give it any right or title to acceptance, he must rest the merit of his righteousness upon some other ground than its own intrinsic perfection.

Again, that the discovery of the folly of former

conduct—the regret for the loss of opportunities long gone by—sorrow, remorse, or compunction for past sins—resolutions of amendment, or efforts of reformation, which begin to be felt, or to be attempted first, under such desperate circumstances as these, are all preposterous and useless. They are too late to remedy the evil, and calculated only to add to the bitterness of its effects. When the time of retribution is come, the season of probation is over; and when the period of probation is at an end, the consequences of past negligence are irretrievable. The present life, then, is the accepted time, and the day of salvation; within which, short as it is at the longest, and shorter as it may become in a variety of ways, both the good and the bad are accorded all the trial, which they are ever to expect. He who neglects the opportunities of this brief space, neglects what will never be placed in his power again; and he who abuses the present day of salvation—by the abuse of a momentary span, and of means critically adapted to their proper end, hazards the interests of eternity, and may forfeit the happiness of an endless futurity.

Again, the separation which is thus effected of one half of the same company from the other, is a separation made for the first time now; as the first open distinction between the good and the bad, between the real and the merely seeming and nominal, in the same society of professing Christians, will be made at the day of judgment—and like that of the virgins, will be made according to the difference of their personal characters, as evidenced by the different lives and conduct of each. The separation was effected by the coming of the bridegroom, and the

state of preparation for that event in which it found the parties, professing to be waiting for it, at the time; as the discrimination of one class of nominal Christians from another, will be made by the return of Christ, and by the state of readiness in which it will find the members of his church, before and at the time of the event. This separation once made, was never undone; nor were the foolish virgins again admitted into the same society with the wise, after being once excluded from it: and the separation of the nominal from the real members of the church, once made at the consummation of all things, and as the result of the process of inquiry previously instituted into the lives and conduct of each, is equally final and perpetual. The last effect of the separation was to leave the wise virgins in the enjoyment of the nuptial feast, and the unwise in a state of exclusion from it; to confirm, consequently, their original invitation to the one, and to render their privilege of guests at the feast, thenceforward inalienable from them—while it annulled it to the other for ever, and rendered the recovery of it impossible: as the final disposal of the good, after the day of judgment, will be to leave them in the enjoyment of their everlasting reward within the kingdom of heaven; the final doom of the wicked, after the same event, will be to leave them not merely in a state of perpetual exclusion from the happiness of the good—which would be only a negative evil—but in a state of condemnation to some proper punishment peculiar to themselves; which is the positive misery that must fall to their lot^y.

^y The parable of the wedding-garment, which resembles the parable of the virgins in a variety of circumstances, almost too

obvious to require pointing out, yet differs from it in the following respect ; which is sufficient to discriminate them asunder. The moral of the former parable was twofold ; partly to account for the transfer of the offer of the gospel, with all the privileges, present or to come, entailed by its reception, from the Jews to the Gentiles ; whereby the former ceased to be, and the latter became the visible church and people of God : partly, to define the rule of acceptance according to which even the Gentiles, considered as substituted to the Jews in this relation of the people of God, should yet be judged, before the transition of the visible into the invisible church. The moral of the latter parable is single ; and without any special reference to the case of the Jews as contradistinguished to Gentiles at one time, or to that of Gentiles as distinct from Jews, at another, in such and such respects, applies to the case of the possessors of the relation of the nominal people of God, in the abstract ; that is, to the members of the visible church, as such—though more especially considered as Christians, and by the nature of their profession itself, as subjected to a scheme of probation on Christian and evangelical principles. The second order of guests in the former parable corresponds to the company of virgins in the latter ; and both answer to the idea of the congregation of the visible church, such as will be its resulting amount, at the end of the existing scheme of probation, when every member of the future and invisible church shall previously have been subjected to, and previously have undergone his proper individual trial, as a member of the prior and visible. This is an effect which can be produced, only in the course of time, and that time the appointed duration of the visible church ; but to the eye of Omniscience it may be considered as good as produced, from the very first contemplation of the scheme of probation, and the first institution of the visible church. Nor where the congregation of this church in the abstract, as the aggregate amount of such and such a number of moral and responsible human beings, successively subjected to a certain preparatory trial, through a certain determinate space of time, with a view to a certain resulting effect, at the end of the time—is made the subject of a proper parabolic representation, under any image whatever ; would it be correct to say that the existing amount of the number at a given time, while the scheme of probation is still in the course of continuance, and the aggregate amount of responsible beings

successively subjected to it, is still in the course of formation, can be meant by this representation—and not the resulting amount at the end of the whole time, and the sum of the number as collected from the items or details of its particular parts. In other respects, the wedding-garment, in the former parable, would answer to the oil-vessel in this; and each be the criterion between a nominal member of the visible church, at a given time, and a real one.

The silence of the parable with respect to any distinct agency of such a person as the bride, over and above that of the virgins, her supposed attendants, and the guests at her wedding-feast, may be due to this circumstance; that the mystical bride, in the consummation of such a mystical ceremony as the union between Christ and his true church, can be nothing distinct from the mystical guests at that feast; in other words, the mystical bride of the parable is the wise part of the company of virgins, her attendants. Certain it is, that the presence and attendance of the virgins are considered as necessary to the course and consummation of the marriage solemnity, as those of the bride; and therefore that they are supposed to go forth at first, expressly to meet the bridegroom, and are called forth at last, expressly to come and join his train. As to the circumstance, that the number of the wise virgins is supposed to be exactly equal to the number of the unwise, both collectively standing for the aggregate amount of nominal and real believers, who shall ultimately be found to have been previously members of the same visible church; how far it is literally to be construed, I cannot undertake to say. The number of the real may bear the proportion of equality to that of the nominal, and it may not: but some definite proportion it must bear, though what in particular, time only can shew. The answer of our Lord to the question, Are they that are saved few? indirectly expressed as it is, would lead to the inference that they who are saved *are few*, in comparison of those who are not, rather than that they are *many*. Meanwhile, such reasons as might account for this particular supposition, that the number of the wise virgins was equal to that of the unwise, much more was not less than it, without implying more to be intended thereby than a simple regard to historical propriety, and the decorum or probability of the narrative, were assigned in their proper place.

Be this, however, as it may, it is more to the purpose to observe, that no representation could have shewn more plainly than does the parable, that professing members of the visible church, or if we will, professing Christians, being adumbrated by the company of virgins in general; professing Christians, with respect to every thing that does not depend on themselves, and is not resolvable into the difference of their personal dispositions and characters, are placed in circumstances exactly the same, considered as those of a state of trial; equally favourable or equally unfavourable for a common result, affecting both the real and the nominal alike—the attainment of a common salvation. We might challenge any one to point out a particle of difference in the duty, the obligations, the opportunities, the hopes, and prospects, of one class of the virgins compared with the other, from the first, to account for the difference in the fortunes of each at last—if it be not the distinction of personal principle, which disposed the one to make a better use of common means and opportunities with a view to a common end, while they were still in their power, than the other did—if it be not that personal prudence and circumspection, which discriminated the wise, and that personal quality of thoughtlessness and improvidence, which was as characteristic of the foolish.

Unless then it can be shewn that the one, in the exercise of their natural prudence, were not voluntary agents, or the other, in acting according to their natural thoughtlessness, were necessarily involuntary ones; it will follow that the ultimate attainment of a common privilege, in which all hoped to partake beforehand, depended as much on the personal prudence and circumspection of the wise, as its ultimate loss on the personal thoughtlessness and improvidence of the foolish. We may learn hence, that as the Christian vocation is addressed indifferently to all, and the Christian reward is proposed indiscriminately to all; so the vocation is not addressed to any, as what they may not accept, nor the reward proposed to any, as what they may not attain to, more or less of themselves. They who disobey the call, or fail of the reward, are accountable for the consequences, as free agents. God is innocent of the blood of all men. He desires the salvation, he commands the obedience, and he promises to reward the obedience, of every man: but the man is bound to cooperate in the work of his own salvation, as becomes a moral and responsible being; and so far as his own

cooperation is concerned he is bound to act as if every thing depended on himself. If any, under such circumstances can attain to the desired effect, all may ; and consequently none who is previously placed in a state of probation, can become a cast-away and perish at last, but through his own fault. He has failed to do what depended upon himself beforehand ; and is most justly to be denied what depends upon God, at last.

PARABLE TWENTY-SEVENTH.
ALLEGORICAL.

THE TALENTS.

MATTHEW, XXV. 14—30. HARMONY, IV. 19.

MATTHEW, XXV. 14—30.

14 “ For as a man that was going abroad, *he* called his proper
“ servants, and committed unto them his possessions. 15 And
“ to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another
“ one ; to each *of them* according to his proper ability : and im-
“ mediately went abroad. 16 And he who had received the five
“ talents, went and wrought therewith, and made five other
“ talents. 17 In like manner, he too who *had received* the two,
“ himself also gained other two. 18 But he who had received
“ the one *talent*, went his way and digged in the earth, and hid
“ away the money of his lord. 19 Now after a long time cometh
“ the lord of those servants, and holdeth a reckoning with them.
“ 20 And he who had received the five talents, came to *him*, and
“ brought to *him* other five talents, saying, Lord, five talents
“ thou hast committed unto me ; see, other five talents have I
“ gained unto them. 21 And his lord said to him, Well *done*,
“ good and faithful servant ; for a few *things* wert thou faithful,
“ over many *things* will I appoint thee ; enter into the joy of
“ thy lord. 22 And he also who had received the two talents,
“ came to *him*, and said, Lord, two talents thou hast committed
“ unto me ; see, other two talents have I gained unto them.
“ 23 His lord said to him, Well *done*, good and faithful servant ;
“ for a few *things* wert thou faithful, over many *things* will I

“ appoint thee ; enter into the joy of thy lord. ²⁴ And he also,
 “ who had received the one talent, came to *him*, and said, Lord,
 “ I know thee to be an hard man, reaping where thou hast not
 “ sown, and gathering whence thou hast not scattered. ²⁵ And
 “ being afraid I went my way and hid thy talent in the earth :
 “ see, thou hast that is thine. ²⁶ And his lord answered and
 “ said to him, Evil and slothful servant, thou knowest that I
 “ reap where I have not sown, and gather whence I have not
 “ scattered. ²⁷ It behoved thee, therefore, to have put my
 “ money to the bankers ; and when I came, I should have got
 “ me mine own with interest. ²⁸ Take away, therefore, the
 “ talent from him, and give it to him who hath the ten talents.
 “ ²⁹ For to every one who hath shall it be given, and he made
 “ to abound ; but from him who hath not, even that he hath shall
 “ be taken away from him. ³⁰ And cast ye forth the unprofit-
 “ able servant into the darkness which is without ; there shall
 “ be weeping and the gnashing of the teeth.”

MATERIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE resemblance between the parable of the ta-
 lents, and the parable of the pounds, in every thing
 which did not belong to the œconomy of the king-
 dom, or to the personal history of the nobleman, in
 that parable, but not of that of his servants, is so close
 and particular, that it is obviously 'superfluous to
 explain the material circumstances in the present
 instance, after having given a minute account of
 them in the former. The preliminary explana-
 tion, then, which might have been necessary to
 ascertain the Moral, or to prepare the way for
 the Interpretation, in this parable, has been so far
 anticipated, that nothing is requisite at present, ex-
 cept to point out in what respects the two parables
 agree—which will be found to be in the greatest part

of their structure—and if any distinction is perceptible between them, to mention in what they differ.

For instance, the distinction of agents concerned in the parabolic transaction, into principal and subordinate, is the same in each; and being referred to the constitution of a family of antiquity, the proper relation of the principal personage to the subordinate, on the one hand, is that of the master, the proper relation of the subordinate to the principal, on the other, is that of the servants, in each.

Again; the subject of the parabolic narrative, takes its origin alike in each. The principal personage is called away from home by some necessity, affecting himself, but not the subordinate parties. For a certain length of time, therefore, the master of the household is obliged to be absent from home; and for the same length of time, the members of his household are required to be left without their head. The first cause of the material œconomy, described in the parable, is to be traced up to this distinction. The necessity under which he is placed of departing from home for a time, may be supposed to suggest to the master the idea of a certain œconomy for the trial of his servants; the interval of his absence from home, affords the opportunity of carrying it into effect. The œconomy of probation, then, which ensues, is strictly coextensive with the duration of his absence; beginning as soon as he is gone, continuing while he is away, and terminated only by his return.

Again, the subject-matter of the trust, supposed

to be committed to the servants in this instance also, is such as a master, preparing to go abroad for a certain length of time, might naturally be expected to commit to his servants for the term of his absence; viz. his property in general; with this difference between the two representations, that a part of his property was committed to his servants in the former parable, all of it is so in this; every thing, at least, which can be supposed denoted by his *ἐπαρχοντα*, or possessions, absolutely mentioned, in general. The description of property in question, is minæ or pounds in the one instance, talents in the other; between which, however, (though a mina of ancient money was but the sixtieth part of a talent,) both being considered as sums of money, and both as the proper subject-matter of a proper responsible trust—there is no difference.

The persons to whom the minæ were committed in the former instance, were a certain number of the servants of the master—as opposed to the rest; and those to whom the talents are entrusted in the present instance, are his *ἰδιοί*, that is, his proper and peculiar servants—which also may mean a certain number among the members of his household, as opposed to the remainder. The servants in the former parable, possessed one character, in relation to their master, before his departure—nothing distinct from that of the rest of his family—and another after it, peculiar to themselves; and so they do in the present parable likewise: and as that peculiar character was the same in all the servants before, so it is in them all now. They are all alike stewards of their master's property during his

absence ; they are all alike servants left in trust for a special purpose, while their master is away from home.

The declared or ostensible motive to the commission of the trust to each of the servants, in the present instance, is the same as before ; and equally natural under the circumstances of the case, both with respect to the author of it, and to the receivers ; viz. the safe-keeping, improvement, and augmentation of the property of the master, by the care and management of his servants, while he is away ; which so far was more for his benefit, than for theirs. The concealed or final end of the dispensation, too, to judge from the sequel, must have been the same in this instance as in the former : viz. the rewarding, advancing, or promoting the servants at last, as the subjects of the trial or probation entailed by the trust beforehand, in some manner or other, according to the results of the trial ; which was so far an end and effect personally concerning themselves, as much as the former their master.

In the former instance, the same sum of money, denoted by a mina, was committed to each of the servants ; in the present instance, different sums, each consisting of so many talents, are committed to different servants. But in the former instance no regard was supposed to be paid to the different competency of the receivers ; in the present instance the proportion of the sums committed to each, is determined by the ratio of the respective abilities of those who receive them in trust. It follows, therefore, that the receivers in the former instance, in

point of competency beforehand, were treated as equals; and the receivers in this instance are treated in the same respect, as unequals—and the ratio of the sums committed to their care, is the ratio of the abilities of those who receive them, to use and apply them accordingly. The whole of the master's property was not divided out among the servants in the former instance, but only a pound apiece to ten of their number; the whole of his possessions must be supposed to have been distributed among them in the present instance—to some in the ratio of five talents, to others of two, and to others of one, according to their respective abilities. In point of presumed ability for the use of their trust, then, there was but one class of the servants collectively, before; but there are three, now. What actual differences there might be, among the servants, in this respect, must have been left in the former instance to be determined by the trial about to be made of their capacity itself; but is intimated in the present instance by the act of the master, when imposing his trial upon each: estimated by which criterion, too, the presumed ability of the third was nearer to that of the second, than this was to that of the first. It follows, also, that the object of the trial, in the former instance, as far as the servants were concerned, was to discover their personal genius and capacity, as well as their personal principle, their personal diligence, and disposition towards their master in general; but the experiment, in the present instance, could not have been directed to the first of those purposes, though it might be, and in fact it must have been, to the second.

With respect to the departure of the principal personage, which takes place at the same point of time in each of the parables, there is the same silence in the present as in the former instance, upon every thing that directly concerns him, from the moment of his going away to the moment of his coming again: the duration of his absence only, which was implied before to have been considerable enough for the production of the historical effects which took place while it lasted, and to answer the purpose of an œconomy of probation for the servants, against the period of the return of the master—is affirmed, in the present instance, to have been “a long time.”

With respect to the conduct of the servants, considered as the subjects of the scheme of probation, going on meanwhile—there is the same evidence in this instance as in the former, of a difference of personal principle among them, actuating each to a difference of personal behaviour, in the use and application of a common trust, under a common obligation beforehand, to use it with equal diligence and fidelity for a common purpose; and the same proof of a difference of personal capacity, as evinced by the difference of personal success. There is the same reason too to suppose, in this instance, as in the former, that none of the subjects of the probation, whether as using or abusing his particular trust, denotes an individual person, but a class of individuals: and consequently there is the same reason as before to conclude, that the number of such classes is four in all; three of those who in various ways

apply their trust aright, and the fourth of those who, by whatever distinction in the means adopted to produce a common effect, yet agree in the result of them all, the abuse of their trust alike.

Moreover, the choice and determination of the particular method in which each of the servants was to apply his proper trust, being left in this instance, as well as in the former, to the discretion of the trustee himself; there is the same reason as before to conclude, that the effect of the application, in two out of the three instances of its right use and successful administration, was due to some among the possible means of improving a pecuniary deposit, different from the most simple and obvious one of turning money into money by the method of usury; and that the effect in the third instance of all, as the least degree of the good use of a trust like this, which would have satisfied the master and acquitted the servant from blame, was due to this simple and obvious method itself; while the abuse in question, opposed to them all, and more especially to the last, consisted in withholding the original trust, not only from all the other possible modes of application, which might have improved it to a still greater degree, but even from this, the easiest as well as the least of all, and consequently in retaining it to the end, unproductive and barren—contrary to the final end of the commission, and repugnant to the nature of the subject of the trust—and not only without any positive addition to its amount, but virtually as much less, at last, as it might have been rendered greater, by the accumulation of interest upon the principal, for the term during which it was held.

It is observable, too, that the proportion of the gains in this instance to each other is nearly the same as in the former, viz. that of two to one; but not in comparison with the sums received. A gain of ten pounds was made in one instance before, and a gain of five in another; as a gain of five talents is made in one instance now, and a gain of two in another; but each of the former was effected by the use of *one* mina, the first of the latter was made by the use of *five* talents, the second by the use of *two*. In proportion, therefore, to the sums originally received, the gains were greater in the former instance than in the latter. The reasons of this distinction may appear hereafter. At present, with respect to the particular suppositions in the later parable—remembering that the sums originally committed to each of the servants were represented to be in proportion to their respective abilities, we may observe, it is with an evident propriety that the gains acquired by the use of these sums, are represented as preserving the relative proportions of the sums themselves, which is in fact that of the abilities of the receivers; and still more so, that though each may equal, neither is supposed to exceed, the amount of the original trust. These gains being compared together too, supposing the means and opportunities enjoyed by each of the receivers of the sums in question, to be exactly commensurate to his power of using them, for the improvement of his trust; it was *a priori* to be expected that he who, as competent for the use of most, had been entrusted with most, should be found to have gained most: yet, notwithstanding this, the earnings of all being in proportion to their means, and their means to their powers

and capacities, he who had earned most, as having received most, and as being competent to the use of most, had not acquitted himself better in the discharge of his trust than he who had earned least, because as being qualified for the use of least, he had been entrusted with the possession and management of least.

The return of the principal personage again, after a personal absence of however long a duration previously, takes place in this parable, at last, as well as in the former: and his return is followed here, as it was before, by a calling of the servants to account for the mode of the administering of their trust, during the absence of the master; the business of which account answers as properly to the idea of an œconomy of retribution, as the use and administration of the trust, into which it constitutes the inquiry, to the idea of an œconomy of probation.

There is the same reason also to conclude in this instance as in the former, that the process of this inquiry is a public transaction, carried on in the presence of others besides the principal parties—who likewise have a proper duty to discharge, arising out of the process, and equally affecting both the parties in it. The individual subjects of the probation beforehand, are here also individually called to their account at last, after a similar order; beginning with those who had deserved best, and ending with those who had deserved worst, at the hands of the master, for the use they had made of his own trust: and the dispensation of their proper reward to the one, is over here also, before the dispensation of their proper punishment to the other, begins or is

carried into effect. The same language is attributed to the subordinate personages, as they are individually called to their account, both to make known the successful result of the administration of their trust, where it has been well applied, and to tender their gains along with the original deposit, as not less the right of their master than the sum originally committed to them, by the use of which they had been made; and also to justify their personal sloth and indolence, where the trust had been suffered to remain unproductive, and the money committed to the servant was tendered back to its owner, nominally such as it had been received, but really less than before: the only difference in this part of the two narratives being one which is equally characteristic of the propriety of each—that the talent is supposed to have been buried in the ground in this instance, the mina to have been kept hid in a napkin before: for a talent was too large a sum to have been capable of being concealed in a napkin, and a mina too small a sum to require to be buried in the ground; but the end designed by this different disposal of each, with respect to the receiver, was the same—that it might be kept by him, as he had received it—and the effect produced by it to the injury of the master, was a common one—that his money in either instance was rendered unprofitable to its owner. The same answer too is attributed to the principal personage, both when he accepts the tender, and expresses his approval of the conduct, of each of the meritorious servants; and when he replies to the address of the indolent servant, and out of his own mouth exposes and condemns the absurdity and weakness of his plea.

There is the same accommodation too, in this instance as before, of the nature of the reward to the nature of the desert, which produces it; viz. the commission of another trust in return for the faithful discharge of a former: and the new trust, in this instance also, stands distinguished from the old, as what is “much” of a certain kind is distinguished from what is “little” of the same kind. There is the same intimation also of something like an extra dispensation in favour of the most meritorious servants of all, over and above their proper share of the common reward of the common merit earned by the faithful discharge of a common trust; according to which, whatever degree of that reward might have been intended for all, and might have been earned by all, who had shared in the common trust, (even by those who had proved unfaithful to it, as much as by those who had not,) being lost to the one, through their own fault—and requiring to be given to some one or more of the rest—it was bestowed upon these in particular. And lastly, the proper punishment of the unprofitable servant, which was implied in the former parable, is distinctly specified in this; viz. besides his personal disgrace in being deprived of his past trust, and rendered altogether unfit for future confidence; his being driven from the presence of his master, and ejected into the outer darkness, where should be “weeping and the gnashing of the teeth.”

THE MORAL.

It must be evident from the above review, that two histories, each of them capable of being regarded distinctly from the other, are combined in

the same account. The first of these begins with the departure, continues during the absence, and terminates with the return of the principal personage; the second begins with his return, and continues to the end of the narrative: that is, the first of these histories expires where the second begins, and the second begins where the first expires. The principal agent in both is the same, and the subordinate agents in both are the same also. The subject of the first is the commission of a responsible trust, by the former of those agents to the latter, designed to be administered in a certain way, while it was retained, and sometime to be rendered up again. The subject of the second is the resumption of that trust, the inquiry into the mode of its administration previously, and the dispensation of reward or of punishment, to its proper subjects, according to the merits of the case. These two histories, then, as related of the same persons, are the distinct, but consecutive parts of the same general œconomy, the former of which conducts to the latter, while the latter concludes and fills up the former. The history of the commission of the trust beforehand would have been incomplete, without the history of the account exacted of it at last; and the history of that account at last could have had no being, without the history of the commission of the trust previously. The end of the parabolic narrative in general, then, is comprised in this part of its details in particular: a conclusion to which the greater length and circumstantiality of this part in comparison of the preceding, would of itself have led us; the one being dispatched in five verses, the other extending through twelve.

Now if the first of these histories will bear to be

regarded as an adequate representation of a certain scheme of probation; the second, which answers to it so exactly, will bear to be considered an adequate representation of a corresponding scheme of retribution. If the first of these accounts in the parable merely prepares the way for the second, the scheme of probation answering to the former, must prepare the way for the scheme of retribution corresponding to the latter; and if the first account, for that reason, is subordinate in its proper place to the second, so must the scheme of probation represented by the one, be subordinate in its order to the scheme of retribution adumbrated by the other^b.

It is an observable difference between this parable, and the one immediately preceding it, that no such practical direction is found to be appended to this, as was seen to be subjoined to that. We may argue

^b The connection of a scheme of probation on the one hand, and a scheme of retribution answering to it on the other, is so close and reciprocal, that it is impossible for either to be made the subject of an appropriate representation, without, in some manner or other, implying the other. It ought not to surprise us, then, if in any delineation, however complete, of the antecedent scheme of probation, we trace, interwoven with it, the outlines of the consecutive scheme of retribution: or *vice versa*. But when both are distinctly combined together, as separate, and individual parts of the same whole, (which is the case in the parable,) the very relation of cause and effect, of antecedent and consequent, suffices to prove that the end of all, the object proposed by the union of two such parts, must reside in that to which the other conducts; in the scheme of retribution, not in the scheme of probation. Under such circumstances, the scheme of retribution takes precedence of the scheme of probation: the account of the latter is preliminary and subordinate to that of the former.

from this distinction, that the present parable was not intended to supply any moral inference: that the representation contained in the one, was capable of being applied to the enforcement of the duties of diligence, readiness, perseverance for such and such purposes—but not that contained in the other. Regarding both as equally designed for a future, and not an existing scheme of things, we may infer that from the time the material fact, pourtrayed in the former of these delineations, should begin and continue to be in being, the season of such precepts, the time for their being remembered, observed, and applied, would begin and continue also; but when the matter of fact adumbrated by the latter, was now at hand, the season of such precepts, the proper time for recollecting and observing them, was past.

This conclusion is no more than the necessary consequence of the essential difference between two such things as the doctrine of a scheme of probation, however represented, and that of a scheme of retribution—with respect to their practical tendency. The season of trial is the season of vigilance, labour, and perseverance; the appointed period of the use and employment of every means, which can further the Christian work, and enable us to render our calling and election sure. With reason, then, are precepts, admonitions, and warnings, found to go along with the representations of a scheme of trial—teaching the necessity, urging the expediency, foretelling the blessed effects, of a timely foresight, an unslumbering watchfulness, a patient and unwearied assiduity, in the discharge of an appointed part; in the legitimate use and application of all the means of grace, and opportunities of salvation. But when the

period of trial is over, the period of preparation is past; and with it the possibility or the expediency of any further cautions, or instructions, to make the best use of means and opportunities still in being.

But though it should be considered probable that the subject of the parable is rather the œconomy of a scheme of final retribution, than one of preparatory probation; the question will still remain, who are the persons supposed to be properly concerned in it? The parties in the parable are one principal, the rest subordinate; whose relation to each other is that of the master of an household, on the one hand, and that of his servants, on the other; and the parts respectively attributed to them arise out of this relation. If then it can be determined whom we are to understand by the master, it will follow whom we are to understand by the servants; if what, by the œconomy of either kind, and more particularly that of the retribution, represented in the parable—we shall know what is meant by the part and agency respectively attributed to the persons concerned in it. Now by the master, I contend, we are to understand our Saviour Jesus Christ: and by the œconomy of retribution, the process of the final judgment.

For, first, to say nothing of the argument from the analogy of the preceding parable, in which the principal personage was shewn to be Jesus Christ; to take it for granted also, that if our Saviour is speaking of himself under any character, in the present parable, he is speaking *indirectly*, or under the disguise of an allegorical resemblance; still, I think, it must be inferred that if the circumstances, rela-

tions, and history of the principal parabolic agent are those of a real personage, they can be only the circumstances, relations, and history of such a real personage as our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Thus, this parabolic personage is described as the head of a family; and our Saviour in like manner is the Head of an household, the church. The parabolic master of this family after continuing with it uninterruptedly before, leaves it for a time, and goes away into another country: and Jesus Christ, after being personally conversant with the household of faith, during his personal ministry upon earth, departed into heaven, and so ceased for a time to be present with them. The master was expected to return home again; and Christ must be expected to come again from heaven. The personal separation of the former from his household was temporary; and the personal absence of Christ from his church on earth, if he is ever to return, will be only temporary also. The duration of the master's absence was considerable; and the duration of the absence of Christ since his departure into heaven, has been already considerable, and if it is yet to continue sometime longer, the more considerable it will still be, before he returns. The master preparing for a long absence from home, did certain things with his servants, for a proper end and effect; and appointed certain constitutions, affecting his household, to begin to have force as soon as he was gone, and to continue in force until his return: and Jesus Christ, preparing to depart into heaven, did something analogous to this, as it will be shewn hereafter, for a corresponding design and purpose, and similarly affecting the constitution of his church in his absence.

The servants, by virtue of such constitutions, from the moment of the departure of the master, became subject to a proper œconomy of probation, against a proper œconomy of retribution : and the church, by virtue of its corresponding constitution, from the time of the departure of Jesus Christ into heaven, became similarly situated also. The master came home at last ; and Jesus Christ will sometime return from heaven. The master's return was followed by the holding of an account with the servants ; and the return of Christ will be followed by the judgment of Christians.

Besides these considerations, some circumstances are disclosed by the history, concerning this parabolic master, which without the utmost impropriety could not be understood of any master of a family but Jesus Christ. It has been seen, that for some reason or other, the master goes away into another country ; and when the reason which requires his absence from home has ceased to operate, we have also seen that he returns : and though it would be absurd to suppose that the principal parabolic personage must not occupy the most important place in the parabolic œconomy—that the motive which produces his absence for a time must not be an adequate motive—that the business requiring his personal presence abroad, must not be some definite business concerning himself, but none of his family besides ; yet, from the time of his departure to the time of his return, the history loses all sight of him. He goes away apparently as any common individual, or master of a family might do, upon his ordinary business which called him abroad : but does he come back like an ordi-

nary individual, returning from an ordinary errand abroad? Is it not, as the sequel shews, invested with a new and exalted character; with a train of followers and attendants, to give celebrity to his appearance, and to execute his commands? Is it not, as the dispenser of rewards and punishments to the proper subjects of either—as possessed of power and authority for both purposes—as the disposer of offices of trust, emolument, or dignity—with the means, in short, of amply remunerating the good, and as indignantly resenting the evil desert, contracted by his proper dependents during his absence?

If these things are true, in ever so slight a degree, of the principal parabolic personage; some change must have ensued in his personal character and situation, between his departure and his coming again; a change, which it would almost amount to an absurdity to suppose could ever have been meant to be understood of a private individual, like any ordinary master of a family, called away by his ordinary business from home—but which it is easy to conceive of such a master of a family as Jesus Christ; who went away into heaven as man, and will return from thence as God; who went away without pomp or state, and will return with the ensigns of Kingly power and majesty; who went away as a private individual, and will return as Lord of all; who went away to enter upon his own reward, by sitting down at the right hand of God, and being installed in the government of the world as well as of the church; who will continue in heaven so long as the purposes of his providence require his continuance there, and afterwards will return again to the earth in person, to dispense their reward to his

servants, and to execute vengeance upon his enemies.

Again, the strain of the benedictory command addressed by the master to each of the meritorious servants, bidding them enter into the joy of their lord, would be unexampled and even inexplicable, in a private and domestic sense. In what sense, we may ask, could such a command be supposed addressed by an ordinary master, under ordinary circumstances, to any servant, who had deserved ever so well at his hands? But it is truly significant, if it be understood in the scriptural sense of the phrase, and as proceeding from such a master as Jesus Christ. Upon that construction, to enter into the *joy* is to enter into the reward of Christ; “who for the joy that was set before him,” that is, for the sake of the great and glorious recompense, which he knew to be reserved for his humiliation and sufferings, “became subject to death, even the death of “the cross, despising the shame.” Into this joy did the Captain of human salvation, made perfect by suffering, enter; when the work of redemption being accomplished—the bitter cup which the Father had given him to drink being drained to the dregs—he ascended into heaven, and with his crucified body was received into the glory of God. And into this joy he may vouchsafe to receive his servants; who by treading in the same steps as their Master, taking up the cross like him, and though at ever so humble a distance, following the example of his patience—so far entitle themselves, however imperfectly, to taste in their proportion of his reward.

Lastly, the very first sentence of the parable, rendered strictly in conformity to the grammatical

construction of the original, demonstrates that the Author of the parable was speaking of himself throughout it. The beginning of this parable must be taken in conjunction with the close of the last, and both together be rendered as follows: "Watch ye, therefore; because ye know not the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of man is coming. For as a man that was going abroad, *he* called his proper servants, and committed unto them his possessions, and immediately went abroad." The only nominative, which can possibly be understood to govern the verbs in this second sentence, is the same *Son of man* directly mentioned in the first sentence; in which case, the history ushered in by that sentence, was designed to be related, not of any master of a family, preparing to depart from home, and acting in a certain way, for the management of his household affairs in his absence, but of the Son of man, that is, our Saviour himself, before his personal departure from the head of his household the church, as making the same provision for the affairs of his household, and the conduct and employment of his servants, during his absence, which any prudent head of a family, under similar circumstances, would naturally and ordinarily have made ^a.

^a Should it be objected to the above construction, that ἐκάλεσε, and the other verbs, are in the past tense, but the fact to which they relate, is still future; I answer this objection by another, that ἔρχεται in the preceding sentence, is in the present tense, but the fact to which it refers is still to come. The reply to one of these objections answers the other. For if our Saviour, while yet with his disciples in person, could speak even then of his coming again as not remote, but at hand, he might speak of his going away, and of every thing which was to precede, or to accompany it, as past. The truth is, that to the Divine, or what

In the next place, that the process of retributive inquiry, described in the parable, is such as might

is the same thing, the prophetic apprehension of time, and the succession of events, the future appears as present, and intermediate events as obliterated. There was a luminous instance of this, Matt. xxiv. 45, where *κατέστησεν* was used for *καταστήσει*, the proper tense in reference to a future event.

There is no more force in another objection, which might be derived from the comparison of Mark xiii. 34, as presenting apparently a similar grammatical anomaly. This verse contains a regular syntax, and admits of being rendered accordingly: "As a man, who was abroad, having left his household, and given authority to his servants, and to each of *them* his work, commanded the porter also that he should watch." It is preceded and followed by a general command to watch, grounded on the particular reasons of the duty; and considered as interposed to exemplify the duty by a case in point, the instance adduced wants nothing to the pertinency of the illustration, or to the integrity of the expression. It was not the duty of every servant, belonging to a certain household of antiquity, to watch, whether his master was present or absent; yet each had no doubt his proper employment, on which he was bound to be as intent while his master was away, as when he was at home. The business of watching was the business of that one among the servants of such an household, who kept the door; that is, the porter. Every household of antiquity had such a servant among others:

Utque sedens noster primi prope limina tecti

Janitor egressus introitusque videt.

Ovid. Pastor. i. 137.

Aristides, Opera i. 756. 20. Oratio xl: καὶ θυρωροῖς μὲν οὐ πᾶσι ἀλλὰ τοῖς πιστοτάτοις χρώμεθα, ἵνα μή τις αἰσχύνῃ συμβαίνει περὶ τὴν οἰκίαν, κ', τ. λ. Frontonis Opera Inedita, pars ii. 432. Ερρ. Γραε. vii: ἐκάστω δὲ ἡμῶν τῶν ἰδιωτῶν εἰ μὴ φυλάττοι τὰς θύρας, καὶ πάνυ γρηγοροῖ ὁ θυρωρὸς, εἴργων μὲν τῆς εἰσόδου τοὺς μηδὲν προσήκοντας, τοῖς δὲ οἰκέταις οὐκ ἐπιτρέπων ἀδεῶς ὅποτε βούλωτο ἕξω βαδίξω, οὐκ ἂν ὀρθώσαιτο κυρίῳ τὰ κατὰ τὴν οἰκίαν.

And this, which was the duty of the porter during the presence

answer in all respects to the scriptural idea of the nature and proceedings of the final judgment of Christians; may be shewn as follows :

First, the œconomy of this retribution begins with the return of the master; as that of the final judgment of Christians will bear date from the return of Jesus Christ. The duration of the scheme of probation which preceded it, was commensurate with the term of the absence of the master; as the period of the transaction of the moral probation of Christians is the interval between the personal departure and the personal return of the Head of the church. The œconomy of retribution in the parable which succeeded, was exactly adapted to the œconomy of probation which had preceded, and the subjects of both were the same: and the final inquiry at the day of judgment, to which Christians must expect to be subjected, will be as strictly adapted to the nature of that trial and probation, to which as Christians they have been previously subjected; and the subjects of each will be the members of the visible church.

Again, if the conduct of the principal parabolic personage at last, was any criterion of the nature of his intentions from the first; his object in leaving his servants invested with a certain trust, and placed in a corresponding state of trial, during his personal absence from home, might be, so far as they were concerned, those very consequences of reward or of punishment, which are seen to ensue from the result

of the master of the house, would especially be so in his absence. The case of the porter, then, under such circumstances, was a case in point to illustrate the duty of watchfulness, even to the letter; and is selected with that view, accordingly.

of the trial, to the servants themselves: and it is certain from the intimations which both reason and revelation conspire to furnish of the final end of such a dispensation as the œconomy of moral probation, that Christians are subjected to such a scheme, in the present life, with the assurance of certain personal consequences which may be expected to redound from it to themselves, in the next life.

Again, the emphatic opposition between the mention of *little*, as the subject-matter of one trust, and *much*, as the subject-matter of another; the commission of the former as a means of *trial*, the bestowal of the latter as an instance of *reward*; the usufruct of the one in a state of *probation*, the enjoyment of the other in a state of *retribution*; the substitution of the latter to the former, and the grounds of that substitution; the personal zeal, affection, and fidelity in behalf of another—proved by the loan of *the little*—the cause and motive to the personal promotion, advantage, and benefit of the same subject, in the further commission to him of *the much*: these are circumstances of distinction so applicable to nothing as the great disproportion between a temporal trust of any kind, and its everlasting reward, of whatever kind also; between that which we are commanded and expected to do in this life, and that which we are permitted to hope for from it in the next; between the little which with all our diligence and exertions we can perform of ourselves, to deserve a reward, and the vast, incommensurate magnitude of the recompense which God, of his bounty and goodness, has provided for that desert.

Again, the process of the retributive œconomy in

the parable, bears externally the appearance and characteristics of a judicial inquiry. It is instituted by a competent authority ; it has for its subjects persons strictly amenable to that authority. It is begun and carried on *pro tribunali* ; and through the course of the solemnity, the original character of the master is merged for the time in that of the judge—the proper relation of the servants, in that of persons who as *rei*, are placed at his bar, and answer for themselves before a judge. The declared object of the inquiry is well doing on the one hand, and evil doing on the other ; and such good and evil doing respectively, as entails a good or an ill desert, and qualifies the subjects of either to be the objects of approval or disapproval, of absolution or condemnation, and what is more of reward or punishment, not only in a moral, but in a judicial point of view. For though a master may not be bound to remunerate the good conduct of a servant, and therefore in so doing is under no positive, but solely a moral or voluntary obligation ; yet he cannot do otherwise than resent the misconduct of a servant, and in dispensing proper notes of punishment or censure on that account, he acts under a positive obligation, as much as a judge who administers justice upon an offender against the laws.

The process of this inquiry too appears from the circumstances which attend it, to be no private business, but a solemn proceeding transacted in public— at which others are present, besides the judge who presides at the account, and those who are called upon to render it ; and others, not merely by-standers, and witnesses of what passes, but ministers or instruments of the presiding party, to execute his

commands ; taking away the matter of his trust from the servant who was found to have abused it, transferring it to a more meritorious possessor, and casting the unprofitable servant into the darkness which was without. The return of Christ to the judgment of Christians will be accompanied by the host of heaven ; and the process of the judgment ensuing upon it, will be transacted in the presence of the angels ; whose attendance, upon that occasion, will not be that of unconcerned and indifferent spectators, but of those who will have a proper part and agency to discharge, as the ministers and instruments of the judge ; whose services he will employ both to collect before him all the subjects of the approaching account—to separate them asunder at the time of the account—to place the good in possession of their everlasting reward—and to execute the sentence of condemnation upon the bad.

Again, from the time of the conclusion of their respective audits, the condition both of the good and of the bad servants is manifestly fixed and irreversible ; an issue of things, the consequence of a previous state of probation, and of an œconomy of retribution following upon it at last, which we may justly presume to be characteristic of the effects of the final judgment only. For as the merit of the dutiful servants consisted in the faithful use of their former trust, so the reward of that good desert consists in the enlargement of the former, or the communication of a new trust : as what they were entrusted with before, was a very *little*, so what they are entrusted with now, is *much* : and as their proper trust was committed to them before, by way of trial, so is it now, by way of reward. Some probation of

the trustee was designed by the former trust, because some part of his character was still to be ascertained by its results: none is designed by the latter, because the object of the experiment has been satisfactorily attained. The abilities of the trustees were known, prior even to the commission of their former trusts: their personal principles might be open to doubt. The result of their trial has been an equal assurance as to both. The first trust, then, was partially a mark of confidence, but not without some mixture of distrust: the second is a mark of approbation, founded upon reasons which leave no room for doubt. The former was necessarily temporary; the latter, for ought which appears to the contrary, must be supposed perpetual.

Nor is it less evident that the situation of the unprofitable servant also, convicted by the result of an adequate and impartial trial, to be unworthy of the confidence until then reposed in him, and much more of any further trust; deprived of the privilege, which however undeserving of it he had hitherto enjoyed; banished with disgrace from his master's presence, and the society of his fellow-servants; ejected from the light within, into the darkness without, and from the abodes of joy and happiness, into the region of wailing and the gnashing of the teeth; is not only worse than before, but from the time that his sentence is carried into effect, is desperate and irremediable; with no prospect of change, no hope of amelioration; with no possibility of further trial, no chance of atoning by the exertions of the future for the omissions of the past; with no prorogation of his sentence, however brief, to prevent its immediate effects, no intimation of forgive-

ness, however obscure or however distant—nothing in the present, or the future appearance of his case, to temper the bitterness of instant evil, to relieve the apprehension of worse to come, or to console the despondency of hopeless despair.

On all these accounts we may infer, that the œconomy of retribution, to describe and represent which we have seen to be the chief business and final end of the parable, is strictly the œconomy of such a process, and of such effects, as those of the final judgment. But the question still recurs, who are to be supposed the proper subjects of it? In answer to which we may reply, that if the principal personage in the parabolic representation has been shewn to be Christ himself, in the specific relation of the Head of his household, the church; it can require no argument to prove that the subordinate personages in the same representation must be Christians, in the relation which answers to his, as the members of that household, of which he is the Head. But Christians, even in this capacity, are divisible into the two comprehensive classes of the ministers of religion and the people; and it would not follow that because the parable might apply to the case of Christians as such in general, it may not apply to one of the classes of Christians in particular.

I am aware, indeed, that no part of the New Testament is commonly supposed to supply a more apposite and graphic delineation of the state of probation to which Christians in general, or even moral and responsible agents, whether Christians or not, are subject in the present life, than this parable of the talents; that, in confirmation or illustration of

such a doctrine as that of the moral discipline and responsibility of all rational and accountable human beings, none would be more readily or confidently appealed to, than this parable. The very use of the word *talent*, to express any thing for which men are accountable in the way of moral probation, familiar as it is, in that sense, in the writings of Christian moralists, or even in common discourse, was no doubt originally derived from the presumed authority of this parable: for there is so little connection between the idea of a sum of money, and that of any natural or acquired capacity, which as the subject-matter of a moral trust, and as a means of moral probation, may be used or abused, at the discretion of its possessor, according or contrary to the purposes of its destination; that without the sanction of some precedent, (and such precedent as this parable appears to furnish,) it would be impossible to account for the translation of the term in a corresponding sense. Yet the difficulties which immediately present themselves, if we attempt to explain the parable on this principle, by supposing it applicable to the doctrine of the moral discipline and probation of Christians, without any special restriction either as to the subjects of that probation, or to the instance of the trust, in the administration of which it resides—are neither few nor inconsiderable; as the following examples of them will shew.

First, whereas the master, before his departure, is represented as calling his servants together—giving them their respective commissions—and then going away himself; if the master is Jesus Christ, if the servants are Christians in general, and the time of

his departure is the time of the Ascension, before which no such thing as the Christian church was yet in being—and we are to discover in the fact and nature of that discipline and probation to which Christians are subject as Christians, something analogous to the above, in the order of proceedings, before it came into being, (and I contend that the importance of this preliminary part of the parable to the sequel, requires we should,) where shall we find it, in any thing preliminary to the first institution of the Christian scheme? in any thing transacted before the commencement of that state of moral probation, which began to be with the Christian church? in any thing specially designed beforehand for the beginning, continuance, and final effect of each individual Christian's share in the œconomy of that probation—as much as the act of the master, in assigning his proper task to each of his servants, before his departure, was intended for the benefit of his individual responsibility in the scheme of probation, to be transacted during his absence?

Again, if what was distributed among the servants, as the subject of the trust, was originally the master's, and yet could be divided among them; and consistently with that supposition, if what was divided among the servants, yet being originally the master's, might again be restored to him—and as held meanwhile in trust, was to be restored at last, not only the same in kind, but greater in degree; what have Christians in general, as the subject-matter of a common probation, and as communicated to them in their proper capacity of moral beings, accountable not on any principles but on those of the Gospel—which will answer to this description?

as something originally derived from the proper Master of Christians, and ultimately to be restored to him; as belonging to that Master, even while in the hands of his servants; as held for a time as their own, but to be used and applied as his; as capable of improvement by good use, and of diminution by ill use; as rendered, when rendered again, though the same in kind, yet necessarily different in degree, and not merely as it was received, but either greater or less—and so far either better or worse—than before.

Again, the subject-matter of the trust in the parable, being represented by one and the same thing; whatever description of blessings the talents may be supposed to denote, whether spiritual or temporal; considered as the ordinary means and instruments of the ordinary moral probation of Christians, they must denote blessings the same in kind with respect to all the subjects of the probation in common. We cannot suppose the same parabolic image of a talent to stand for one thing, as the appointed means and instrument of the moral probation of one Christian, and for another, as the appointed means and instrument of that of another Christian. Now what blessing, or species of blessing, whether secular or spiritual, as the proper subject-matter of their moral probation—or what means and instruments available in the way of that probation—do Christians as such, receive and enjoy, indiscriminately, no matter in what proportion—to make it the instance and subject-matter of their proper probation unto all? What do all Christians possess, left to their use and discretion, as identical in its own nature as the talents possessed by the servants in the parable?

Or if the talents be supposed to denote not secular, but religious and spiritual blessings—what shall we say to the peculiar rule, which awarded the sums committed to each servant, as the subject-matter of his individual trust, in so unequal a proportion? For this inequality, it is observable, exists in the ratio of the distribution at first, previously to the trial of any of the parties—as well as in the subsequent augmentation of the original trust, the result and reward of its use and administration. With regard, indeed, to the further increase even of the ordinary means of grace, particular distinctions may be subsequently made, in favour of those who have employed their former opportunities and advantages to the best effect. The rule of the Divine equity laid down by the parable itself, is sufficient to authorize this expectation; “For to every one who hath shall it be given, and be made to abound.” But with respect to the first instance of trial, and the first measure and degree of the helps and facilities, vouchsafed to all because necessary to all, (independently of their own cooperation,) even to begin, and much more to persevere and continue in the work of the Christian vocation; it cannot be proved from scripture, that Christians in general are not on a par, and treated alike; instead of receiving some in the proportion of five, others of two, and others of one talent.

Lastly, the language of the blessing pronounced on the faithful servants, and as collected from that language, the nature of the blessing itself, is not in unison with what is elsewhere intimated, and more especially in others of the parables, respecting the particular reward of good Christians generally. The usual imagery employed to describe it, is some-

thing which implies a similar and equal participation in the resulting benefit, reward, or distinction, like the common joy and pleasure, which are the privilege of every guest invited in common to the same festivity, whether a supper in general or a marriage feast in particular; not something in which from the nature of the case, a part only can be supposed to partake in contradistinction to the rest—such as must be understood by the specific and particular image of entering into the *joy*, that is, of sharing in some degree or other in the proper reward and exaltation, of Christ.

If, then, the subordinate parties in the parable cannot be supposed to stand for Christians in general, they must stand for the ministers of religion in particular, as the only description of the members of the visible church in the complex, who can be understood to be opposed to the rest in general, without being distinguished from them as Christians in particular. Laying this conclusion together with the conclusions previously established, we arrive at the following idea of the moral of the parable :

The parable of the talents, relating to and describing a proper œconomy of retribution, consecutive upon a corresponding œconomy of probation, with respect to a certain description of persons—relates to and describes the process of the final judgment in respect to the ministers of religion, among the complex of Christians; a process to which they in particular, and not the people, could alone be supposed liable *a priori*, and alone be represented as subject at last, by virtue of that peculiar kind of responsibility which is entailed upon them, and

on them only among the complex of Christians, by their peculiar kind of relation to Christ. This view of the moral of the parable will be further confirmed by the interpretation of the facts of its material history.

THE INTERPRETATION.

In the first place, the relation of master, beginning with Christ, and the relation of servants, as propagated downwards, and affecting all orders of persons in the community of the visible church, applies first and most directly to the ministers of religion. Christians in general may be called the servants or household of Christ; but the ministers of religion are his *own*, and his *proper* servants. These, though in subjection to a common master, are nearer to his person, are more distinguished by his confidence, and more possessed of an authority like his own, than their fellow-servants. They are elevated by their place and relation above the rest; they stand in the middle rank, between them and their Master; and serve as the link in the chain of ascent, to connect the Head with the subordinate members of the church on earth. In the constitution of the family of faith or the household of Jesus Christ, the case has always been, as in the domestic relations of antiquity: under the same head are incorporated many divisions of inferiors and dependants; and over each of these some servant of superior consequence and trust.

Again, the course of proceedings with respect to the trust in the parable, according to which its commission to the servants was made immediately be-

fore the departure of their master, and its administration, agreeably to the final end of the commission, began immediately after it, is true of the delegation and exercise of the ministerial trust. For not to mention that the apostles, the future emissaries and instruments of the Gospel, and consequently the future representatives of the ministers of religion, were selected from the body of the disciples, and ordained to their apostolical commission before the personal ministry of Jesus itself was over; there is scarcely an instance, on which he is recorded to have appeared unto them in the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension, when something may not be seen to have passed between them, which either actually or virtually amounted to an evangelical commission, formally given by him, and received by them, for the propagation of the Gospel, and the foundation and government of the church, by their means to be established on earth^c. Any one of these commissions would be given between the close of the personal ministry of Jesus Christ, and the beginning of that of the apostles; the last of them was so on the day of the Ascension itself. The whole interval, indeed, between the Resurrection and the Ascension, according to St. Luke, was devoted by our Lord to these successive manifestations of himself to his apostles; and as often as they thus met together, to conversing with them, and telling them of the things which concerned the kingdom of God^d; that is, the Gospel dispensation,

^c Vide John xx. 21, 22. Harm. v. 9. Matt. xxviii. 18—20. Ibid. 12. John xxi. 15—17. Ibid. 13. Luke xxiv. 47—49. Acts i. 4—8. Ibid. 15. Mark xvi. 15—18. Ibid. 16.

^d Acts i. 3.

now at hand, but not yet formally begun. And as they received their last ministerial commission on the day of the Ascension, that is, the day of the personal departure of the Head of the church; so they entered upon the discharge of its duties only ten days after, on the day of Pentecost next ensuing.

The subject of division among the servants, was the substance or property of their master, the possession of which for the time being, properly made them his stewards; and if by this subject of division, we understand the church of Christ in the abstract—what can be so truly called his, as that which he has purchased by his own blood^c? And as this property of the master was distributed in certain proportions among the servants; so has the church of Christ, from the first, been divided among the ministers of religion—each in particular being entrusted with the care and control of a part of it, and all in general with the care and control of the whole. And as the reception and possession of their master's property for the time being, made the servants his stewards; so does the commission of the church of Christ, either wholly or in part, to the care of the ministers of religion, make them his stewards also.

But if by the subject of division in the parable, we understand not the church in the abstract, but the power and authority, the dominion and jurisdiction, which belong to the head and governor of a religious, no less than a political society, as supreme; this sovereign power and jurisdiction over his church is the right and property of Jesus Christ; and this too, for the sake of the propagation of his

^c Acts xx. 28.

religion, the foundation and maintenance of his church, the good order and discipline necessary to its well-being and government, during its state of probation on earth, though belonging of right to him alone, while its lawful owner is personally absent in heaven, has been committed by him in such and such proportions, to the ministers of religion in his stead.

Of these two constructions of the figure of the talents, which represents the subject-matter of the trust in the parable, the latter is much more probable, because much more consistent with the rest of the circumstances of the parabolic account of the commission of the trust, than the former. Referred to the point of time in that account, when the delegation of the trust is supposed to have been made, the subject-matter of that delegation could not be the church, or any part of the church, as commended to the care of the ministers of religion in the absence of its proper Lord and Master Christ; for the talents were committed to the servants before the departure of the master, but the church was not in being, nor therefore capable of being committed as in being, to the ministers of his religion, before the Ascension of Christ. But the power over all things both in heaven and in earth, which had been already communicated to Jesus Christ before the Ascension, he might and he did transfer, in some proportion or other, before the same period, to the apostles; the Spirit which had been given without measure to himself, at the very outset of his personal ministry, he might and he did derive as plentifully, as the nature of the occasion required, before the commencement of their apostolical

ministry, to them; the name of the Shiloh, the apostle, and so far the representative and vicegerent of the Father, which had been borne by himself, in the discharge of the commission personally imposed on himself, he might and he did affix upon them, as the Shilohs, the apostles, and so far the representatives and vicegerents of Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ, of the Father, in the discharge of the commission personally reserved for them.

The final end of the commission of his property to each of the servants, so far as regarded the master, was not only its safe custody, during his absence, but its improvement and increase; not only that he might receive it again, upon his return, no less than before, but if possible greater, and enlarged beyond its original amount: and the final end of the institution of the ministerial office, so far as regarded the interests of the rightful Lord and Master of the church, must have been analogous to this; not merely the foundation and perpetuity, but the extension and enlargement, of his church on earth—every addition to the numbers and the extent of which, howsoever and whensoever effected, both was and is still the work of the instrumentality of the appointed ministers of the Gospel. And as it appeared from the history, that the consequence of the use and administration of the trust of talents in faithful and diligent hands, was to generate talents, or to multiply the subject-matter of the trust in kind; so in the hands of the honest and industrious steward of Christ, the due discharge of the ministerial trust adds to the power and authority of the master by whose commission it is possessed and exercised; puts out its talent—its share

of derived and communicated spiritual confidence and trust—to a profitable use while it is retained, and prepares it to be restored to its rightful owner at last, not impaired by having been committed to a temporary possessor in his stead, but improved and increased. For they who by labouring in their proper vocation, gain over souls to Christ, or preserve to him those who would otherwise fall away, and be lost—not only perpetuate the existing amount of his spiritual subjects, but multiply it; not only maintain, but extend the visible bounds of his empire and jurisdiction; not only defend his possessions against diminution and decay, but do all in their power to add to his riches, by the fruits of new earnings and acquisitions in his behalf.

The matter of the trusts, then, committed to each of the servants, was not merely to be held and retained as their own for a while, but ultimately to be accounted for, and actually to be rendered up again, as their master's, the same in kind as before, but differing in degree. Now what is entrusted to Christians in particular, or to moral and responsible beings in general, as the subject-matter of moral probation in the common sense of the term, and consequently free to be used or abused at the discretion of its possessor, may, indeed, be liable to be accounted for, so far as the use or abuse of the thing itself is concerned, but cannot be liable to be rendered up again, the same in kind as it was received, yet augmented or diminished in degree; but what is committed to the ministers of religion, for the particular purpose of their probation, is not only liable to be accounted for, but capable of being rendered up at last, the

same in kind, and either greater or less in proportion compared with what was received. The possession of power, jurisdiction, and authority, which has been entrusted to vicegerents or deputies in lieu of a superior of any kind, from the nature of the case must be temporary; and as there was a time when it was not yet possessed, so there must be a time when it will cease to be possessed. A deputy or *locum tenens*, can acquire his vicarious character only by the appointment of his proper superior, and can retain it only in his absence; and as one person could not lay claim to the character of another, without a commission derived from him, so can no person support the character of another in the presence of the person himself. The necessity of the ministerial office to supply the place of Christ, arose out of the necessity of the absence of Christ; as that did out of the nature and final end of that œconomy of trial, designed for the probation of Christians while it lasts; Christ, though the true Lord and Governor of the church, whether absent or present, yet so long as he is personally present in heaven, and therefore personally absent on earth, exercising the powers of the Head of the church, and dispensing the affairs of his spiritual government, in such an œconomy as the administration of the visible church, through the medium of ministers appointed and commissioned by himself; selected, indeed, from the body of their fellow-servants, but elevated by their office, for the time, above the rest. The necessity of such an office is therefore temporary; and when the return of the Head of the church in person takes place, the vicarious power and authority committed to his servants, for the

period of his absence, will of course be resumed by the Master; and by virtue of that resumption, the orders of the visible church, will either disappear *in toto*, or be superseded by the new and more glorious, though possibly analogous distinctions of the orders of the invisible church. And as it was seen in the parable, that each of the servants presented himself to his master, upon his return, to give an account of the administration of his proper trust, while he was away—not merely of what he had received in charge, but of what he had gained, or was bound to have gained, in addition to it; so is it the doctrine of scripture^d, that the ministers of religion shall not only yield up their commissions at the day of judgment, but shall appear with their flocks before Christ, and shall render an account of their care and superintendence of that individual portion of the Christian community, which each, in the days of his probation, received in charge; and whom they have preserved, whom they have gained, whom they have suffered to be lost, to their proper Lord and Master, Christ.

Again, the blessing pronounced upon the dutiful servants, to the nature of which, as collected from the language in which it is expressed, we adverted before—is most intelligible and most apposite, if understood with a special reference to the kind and degree of the reward, which may be presumed to be in reserve for the due discharge of the ministerial trust. Admitting the truth of the doctrine that there is in reserve, in some future state of things, a

^d 1 Thess. ii. 19: Philipp. ii. 16: Hebrews xiii. 17: 1 Pet. v. 2—4.

reward for the well-doing of Christians in proportion to their deserts, and therefore, though the same in kind, yet differing more or less in degree, according to the difference of desert; we may contend that it is but agreeable to reason, and consistent with equity, to suppose, that as a distinction is made in the present state of things, between the ministerial probation in particular, and the Christian probation in general, a distinction may be made in another state of things, between the ministerial reward in particular, and the Christian reward in general; that that class of his servants who have most to answer for to a common master, may have most to expect from him also; that they who are specially obnoxious to his justice and severity, if they fail of their duty, may have special claims on his grace and favour, if they acquit themselves of it aright. And as the visible church is sometime to pass into the invisible—and all who are members of the former will be, or may be, members of the latter; it seems but consistent with the present constitution, and the final destination of the visible church, that something like the analogy and relations of the antecedent state of things should still be retained, and still be perceptible, in the consequent one; that one class of the members of the visible church, who stand distinguished from the rest, in certain respects, at present, should continue distinct from the rest, in the same respects, as members of the invisible; that such of his servants as are placed most immediately in the stead of a common master here, should be elevated to be the nearest to his person, in some capacity or other, hereafter; and the right use and administration of a responsible, delegated trust in the government of

the visible church, should purchase a good degree in the œconomy of the invisible likewise.

And, indeed, the command to enter into the joy of their Master, which the parable specifies as addressed by Christ in his quality of the principal personage, to the servants in their capacity of the subordinate ones, even in its most indefinite sense, would imply something like an elevation to the rank of a master—something like the commutation of the name and degree of a servant for the title and station of a master, in their case, to whom it is addressed; that is, the ministers of religion. When, therefore, the prospect of a future advancement, equivalent, under the circumstances of the case, to the fact of an instant promotion—is held out to each of these servants; and a gift of eleven talents is bestowed at last on that servant in particular, who, as being considered originally the most competent, had been originally entrusted with most—and as entrusted with most, under the presumption of his ability for the use of most, if his disposition were only equal to his ability to use it well, had been found by the event to have gained most, and therefore to be as faithful as any, while he was the ablest of all; this representation may agree throughout to the case of the ministers of religion, both as to their proper trial and responsibility, and as to their proper reward, and the rule by which it will be determined. The former of these facts may exemplify the grounds of the desert, as contracted in their case, to which a reward is considered due; the latter the mode of rewarding it, or the nature of the return supposed to be deserved by it: and both together may conspire to produce this conviction, that the due dis-

charge of the proper ministerial trust here, will be rewarded by the commission of another trust hereafter, to the same persons, and the same with the former in kind, but differing from it prodigiously in degree.

We have not, however, done with the interpretation of the parable. For, if the servants in general stand for the ministers of religion in general, and the talents entrusted to the one, for the spiritual power and jurisdiction committed to the other; and if those three of these servants, who were particularly mentioned, and discriminated by a difference in the comparative amount of their respective trusts, denoted not individuals, but classes of individuals; it will follow that these three classes of servants must represent three corresponding orders or classes of the ministers of religion: in which case, the gradation in the ministry, of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, that is, the three orders or classes of the ministers of religion, under which, considered as forming together the standing ministry of the church in the complex, the church has subsisted since the days of the apostles—would seem to be the first to suggest itself; especially as it would be a gradation of power and authority, and therefore the more likely on that account, as well as from the circumstance of number, to answer to the description of the classes of servants in the parable.

This conclusion, however, though exceedingly specious and plausible at first sight, will be found on examination to be premature. The gradation observable in the parable, is a gradation of ability in

the possessors, as well as of amount in the subject-matter, of the trust; and a gradation of success in the application, as well as of ability in the possessors, of the trust. The difference of ability in the recipients of the trust, determined beforehand the amount of the sums committed to them in trust; and supposing them all equal beforehand in point of honesty and fidelity, the difference of the sums committed to each in trust would prepare the way for a difference of results in the respective applications of the trusts. Unless, then, it could be shewn that the office and jurisdiction of a bishop, in the constitution and government of the visible church, though necessarily greater than those of a presbyter—or the office and authority of a presbyter in the same, though superior to those of a deacon—necessarily imply a greater degree of ability in the possessor of the higher and more important office for the exercise of his proper trust; or unless it could be shewn, that the administration of the higher and more important office, in the hands of its possessor, was necessarily more efficient and successful for its proper purposes, than the administration of the lower; this explanation must fail, and the three orders of servants in the parable, differing from each other as much in their respective abilities as in the respective amounts of their trusts, and in the respective degrees of their gains as in those of both, will not be adequately represented by the three orders of the standing ministry of the church.

The necessity of the case, therefore, requires us to search elsewhere for a triple division in the ministers of religion, answering to the triple gradation

in the orders of the servants, both as to the respective abilities of the parties selected for trust, and to the respective amounts of the sums committed to them in trust: nor shall we discover it satisfactorily in any thing but the different constitution of the church of Christ, at different periods of its being, and in the diversity of provision for its administration and government, which the exigency of the case required to be made at each. One of these divisions, I think, we may recognise in the order of the apostles, as that class of the ministers of religion, and governors of the church, for the time being, who were appointed, ordained, and commissioned by Christ himself, for the exigencies of the first or extraordinary state of the church: another, in the standing ministry, the order of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, taken collectively, as the provision made for the government of the church, in its last or its ordinary state: and a third, in the order of the apostolical men, who came between the former two, and in the constitution and government of the church, were adapted to its middle or secondary state of being, during the transition from its first and extraordinary condition under the apostles, to its last and its ordinary one under its bishops, its presbyters, and its deacons. In confirmation of this explanation we may reason as follows:

First, the servants of every class, though differing in the degrees of their abilities, their trusts, and their success, respectively, were all alike the stewards of their master; entrusted with more or less of his property, and liable more or less to the same responsibility: and all the orders of church governors, whether the extraordinary, the ordinary, or between

the two, must agree in the common circumstance of possessing more or less of the same delegated power and jurisdiction—of representing the same Head of the church—of acting by the same commission—of being stewards of the mysteries of the same Gospel, and as stewards, equally required to be found faithful to their proper duty, and equally liable to be called to their proper account. The servants belonging to one of these classes, might differ in ability from those of another; but they agreed with each other in that respect, and were consequently endued with the same degree of trust: and all the apostles, as one order of the governors of the church at first, all the apostolical men, as the order next to them, and all the successors of both, forming collectively the standing body of the ministry which still subsists—one compared with another, as members in common of their proper order, and contradistinguished as a body, to the members of any other order—were equal, and still are equal, in the degree of power and authority belonging to their own order, whether the same with that of another, or different from it; and if in the degree of power and authority, properly belonging to their order, also in the measure of competency and ability, qualifying the possessors of that power and authority in common, for its use and application, according to the purposes for which it was intended, in common. This may be taken for granted of the apostles, and of the apostolical men, in their proper place and order of time, at the head of the affairs of the church; and if of these two—it must also be assumed of the order of governors last resulting, under which the church subsists at present: for if the ability of the members

of the two first orders of the ministry, as opposed to that of the members of the third, consisted in something extraordinary of a certain kind, as opposed to something ordinary of the same kind; all the members of the last class, as equally discriminated from those of the two former, by the want of this extraordinary qualification, must be so far on a par among themselves, and so far possessed in common of the ordinary qualification opposed to the extraordinary. The last class of the servants, as comprehending those who possessed the least degree of personal ability for the use of a pecuniary trust, and had the smallest sums of money committed to their management—in the amount of its numbers was probably the greatest of all: and the order of church governors, expressed collectively by bishops, presbyters, and deacons, though the least in the degree of the spiritual powers entrusted to it, and the extent of its spiritual authority and jurisdiction—yet being that under which the church has subsisted for the longest time—must necessarily be the most numerous and comprehensive.

The least degree of care and diligence in the administration of his trust, which would have acquitted the obligation of the servant, and the least amount of the improvement of his own property, which would have satisfied the master, was specially applicable to the case of the servants of this class; and in all probability, was the method adopted by them in the discharge of their duty, for both these purposes; viz. by putting out their talent to interest, that so it might be restored to its owner not absolutely barren and unproductive: and the least degree

of the discharge of the duty incumbent on a minister of religion, under any circumstances of the existence of the church; viz. that nothing be lost to his master through his own supineness and neglect—that the spiritual trust in his hands be not impaired or diminished by being committed to him—that the power and jurisdiction of Christ over his church do not become less on the whole, for being confided in any proportion to himself; seems to be the proper measure of the discharge of the duty incumbent upon the standing ministry, represented by bishops, presbyters, and deacons, in the present constitution of the church; the nature of which is such, that the business of the ministers of religion is rather to keep and retain, than to add by fresh acquisitions to the subject-matter of their trust, and there is more danger of losing from the souls which they have received in charge, than means and opportunity of adding to them, by accessions not before possessed. For in the established state of things, where the whole of a country or community is Christian, there can be no opportunity for making fresh converts to the Gospel, though there must be the same occasion as ever to keep those in the profession of Christianity, who already nominally belong to it; and though more souls cannot now be won to Christ, as from those who before were not Christians, yet many may be lost to him from those who are so, if the ministers of his religion, to whose care they have been committed, neglect their charge.

A degree of improvement like this, however, would not have come up to the extent of the duty of the servants of the other classes, nor satisfied the

just expectations of the master in his own behalf, from them : nor from the nature of the case, could the powers and faculties committed to the apostles, or even to the apostolical men, for the benefit of a religion not yet in existence, or recently brought into being, have answered the end designed by the commission, without the foundation and establishment, as well as the care and superintendance, the maintenance and perpetuity, of the religion itself; that is, without much more than the simple conservation of what they had received in trust as belonging to Christ; without the propagation of the Gospel, and the enlargement of its pale to take in communities among whom it was not before professed, as well as to retain in its bosom the churches already in being; without planting and sowing in one quarter after another, wherever there was room for that purpose, as well as nurturing and rearing to maturity the seeds committed to the ground.

The ability of the servants of the first class for the best and most efficient use of their common trust, was by far the greatest of all; and the qualification of the apostles, for the duties of the Christian ministry, as the proper instruments of Jesus Christ in the business of evangelizing the world, and bringing his church upon earth into being—as well as in governing and taking care of it afterwards; as empowered directly from himself, and endued with extraordinary gifts and graces, liberally bestowed upon them, and as freely by them communicated to others—must have been incomparably beyond that of any of the orders of church governors, who came after them in the order of time, and were adapted

to a very different state of things in the constitution of the church. The trust committed to these servants was proportionally the largest also; and the power and authority confided by the Head of the church to the apostles, for the discharge of their proper duty, as the necessity of the case required, was unlimited—extending over the whole church, by their means founded and settled, and over every order of persons in it; a power and jurisdiction which may have been claimed by their successors even of the third order, but was never communicated even to those of the second, as it had been unto the apostles. The success of this class of servants was the greatest also; and in proportion to their success, and to the desert entailed by it, their reward: as the administration of the powers of their trust, the labour, perseverance, and success of the apostles, in the discharge of their ministerial commission, and on these accounts the reward in reserve for the apostles, were, and must be, the greatest likewise. But next to the servants of the first order, in point of ability—in the degree of confidence reposed in them—and in the amount of their gains, ranked those of the second; while as to the servants of the third, there was a manifest failure in the presumptive degree of the special ability which constituted the qualification of the trustee for his trust, and accounted for the magnitude of the gains, as the consequence of its administration, in the other two instances: and in like manner, though the extraordinary graces which rendered the apostles competent to the exercise of their singular prerogative, with equal fidelity, zeal, and success, both for the honour of Christ, and for the good of his church, might be

continued in some degree, and with proportionally similar effects, to the apostolical men, ordained by themselves as their successors in the ministerial office; yet they must subside at last, into the ordinary graces, which though vouchsafed to the ministerial office in general, are not necessarily powerful enough to ensure the successful discharge of its duties, nor to prevent the abuse of the ministerial power and trust by its possessors for the time being. The servants of the third order, however, in point of ability, approached nearer to the servants of the second, than these did to those of the first; and the difference was probably greater, in the kind and degree of the extraordinary gifts possessed by the apostles and the apostolical men, respectively, than between the extraordinary endowments themselves which fell to the lot of the apostolical men, and the ordinary graces which alone remained as the inheritance of their successors, when the extraordinary gifts had ceased. Instances of the abuse or neglect of their trust occurred among the servants of the last order only; nor do we know that any of the apostles, or any of the apostolical men, like Timothy, Titus, Mark, converted, ordained, and appointed to the government of churches, by the apostles, failed in the perfect discharge of their proper duty either from want of ability, or from defect of will; though the fact of unfaithfulness, as well as incompetency, in the standing ministry under which the church has since subsisted, at every period of its history, is too frequently matter of sensible experience, to be reasonably called into question^e.

^e It is no objection to the preceding account of the orders of the servants in the parable, that they are described as receiving

their commissions originally all at once, and as exercising their commissions all at once. With a view to the sequel of the history, which concludes and applies the preparatory œconomy of probation, by a corresponding œconomy of retribution, this preliminary circumstance could not have been otherwise supposed; since if all the servants were to be represented as called to their account together, all must be represented to have been previously exercising their trusts together; and therefore all as receiving their commissions together. Besides which, as an answer to the objection generally, it may be replied, that the servants of each class in order, under their common character of stewards and trustees of the property of their master, represent the abstract character of the Christian ministry, adapted to certain different emergencies in the situation of the Christian church, and modified accordingly, but still the standing ministry for the time being; in its first state, as consisting of the apostles, and adapted to the necessities of the infant church; in its second, as consisting of the apostolical men, and adapted to the necessities of the adolescent church; in its third state, as consisting of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and adapted to the exigencies of the mature or adult church. This, I say, is an answer to the whole objection; since what was done to the apostles, or by the apostles, in this capacity of the representatives of the standing ministry in the government of the church, for the time being, might be said virtually to have been done to, or by, all others, who, though later than they in the order of time, were the representatives of the same ministry for the time being, as well as they.

We cannot take our leave of this parable, and of that which immediately precedes it, without observing that as they were delivered to four of the apostles, like the rest of the prophecy on the mount, in private, they are not only the last which our Saviour delivered, but the last which he addressed to his own disciples; and considered in this relation both to the rest of their number, and to the persons for whom they were intended, they will appear to be singularly apposite and well constructed. The apostles of our Saviour, on such an occasion, and at such a time as this, manifestly stood in the double capacity of the representatives of the body of disciples in general, and of the ministers of religion in particular: the fact of which double re-

lation in the hearers of the prophecy, it is necessary to bear in mind throughout it, and more especially in this concluding part of it. The parabolic matter of which this part consists, seems to have been purposely framed to correspond to this distinction of character in the hearers; one set or species of its descriptions applying to them in their capacity of the representatives of Christians in general, another, in that of the representatives of the ministers of religion in particular. The responsibility both of Christians in general, and of the ministers of religion in particular, as the natural consequence of the probation properly imposed upon either, is exemplified, asserted, and illustrated alike; but each in its proper order, and by a different medium of representation.

Nor is it without reason, that beginning at Matt. xxiv. 45, those descriptions in reference both to the œconomy of probation and to that of retribution, which apply to the case of the ministers of religion, take precedence of those which are applicable to the case of Christians in general. The real truth of the character and relation of the apostles, both at this time and ever after, was rather that of the chosen instruments and deputies of Christ, in the work of the propagation of his Gospel, and of the government of his church, founded by their means, than that of simple believers. In this character, then, they would naturally be first regarded and first addressed; in whatever other, though analogous to, yet subordinate to it, they might also be addressed in the course of the discourse. Besides which, the superior dignity of the ministerial character rendered such precedence over the character of simple believers no more than just; and the superior responsibility of the ministerial trust no more than necessary.

If, however, we consider the time when the whole of this discourse took place, the mere principle of the association of ideas will do much to account for the distinction, and yet the connection, of its topics. Conversing with his disciples almost for the last time, before his personal departure into heaven, our Saviour might naturally have been led to speak of his return, though the intermediate event of the destruction of Jerusalem itself had not suggested it. Speaking of his return, he might as naturally enlarge on its effects; the situation in which it should find believers in himself, nominal or real, and the personal consequences which should thence redound to each. And,

perhaps, this possible connection in the thoughts of the Speaker, between the fact of his going away, and the first commencement of the Gospel scheme of probation, and the fact of his return to judgment, and its consequent close, (which, however remote from each other in point of time, yet in point of order were necessarily successive, and to the eye of Omniscience would appear as simultaneous,) is the best answer to the objection stated above, with respect to the simultaneous commissioning of the three orders of the Christian ministry, represented by the three classes of servants in the parable.

The points of agreement, as well as of disagreement, between this parable and that of the minæ, have been already stated. The orders of the servants in this parable answer to the orders of servants in the other, and the interpretation of the facts of the history in reference to both is the same. It is true, that the sums committed to the several orders in the present parable are different—in the former were the same; the reason of which distinction was, that regard was paid to the ability of the receivers in the one instance, but not in the other; that is, that ability was to be tried in the parable of the pounds, but was not in the parable of the talents. This distinction is compensated by another; viz. that the gains in the parable of the minæ were much greater in proportion to the sum received in trust, than in the parable of the talents; for ten minæ are much more in proportion to one mina, than five talents are to five. Such a degree of gain in the use of the thing received, argues a corresponding degree of ability, as well as of success, in the receiver and user of it; and, therefore, the class of servants in that parable who augmented their one mina in such a proportion, were shewn by the evidence of the event to be as much at the head of the rest, in point of competency for their task, as those who received the five talents were declared to be so by the act and appointment of the master himself; and there is the same reason to conclude, that both in point of ability to qualify them for their task beforehand, and in point of success in the discharge of it afterwards, the first order of servants in the parable of the minæ, compared with any other, stood for the apostles, compared with any other order of the ministers of religion, as that the first order of servants did so in the parable of the talents. The same things are true of the second order in comparison of the third, as denoting the apostolical men in contradistinction to the standing

order of the Christian ministry, represented by bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

The length to which this commentary on the prophecy upon the mount has already extended, requires me to be as studious of brevity, in any further remarks which might be made upon it, as the nature of the case will permit. I trust, therefore, the reader will excuse me, if I close the commentary at this point, and with it the Exposition of the Parables of the Gospels; especially as what follows from this point, Matthew xxv. 31, to the end of the chapter, does not come within the application of the rule, which I laid down at the commencement of my undertaking; viz. to explain the matter in a given instance preliminary to a parable, as well as the parable itself; but not that which was merely consecutive upon it.

Another reason why I should not enter upon a detailed explanation of the remainder of the prophecy is, that to the best of my judgment, it relates to a subject, which neither in the previous exposition of the parabolic matter incorporated with the prophecy, nor in the consideration of any former parable, have we had occasion to advert to, as in any the least degree connected with the topics of the Gospel parables in general; I mean the subject of the general resurrection and the general judgment.

That the subject of a resurrection of some kind, and of a judgment of some kind, is involved in a variety of the parables, and not least of all in those which most immediately precede this last portion of the discourse on mount Olivet; the expositions given of them, if they are entitled to any credit, are abundantly sufficient to prove. But this resurrection and this judgment are both the first of their kind, and particular, not general. The doctrine of a first or particular resurrection rests upon the same authority of scripture, as that of a second and a general one. A first or particular judgment is as much a corollary from the fact of a first or particular resurrection, as a second and an universal judgment from that of a second and universal resurrection. The first resurrection is an event immediately prior to the millenary dispensation; the second to the consummation of all things. The proper subjects of the former are that part of moral and responsible agents, who have been from time to time the members of the visible church, during its state of probation,

whether among Jews or among Christians ; the proper subjects of the latter are the remainder of such moral and responsible agents, that is, the rest of mankind in general—who were never members of the visible church, at any period of its existence, nor were ever subject to any such scheme of probation, as Jews or Christians, each in their proper order of time, have been.

The description which follows from the thirty-first verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew to the end, being of necessity to be understood as a description of the proceedings of the solemnity of some judgment or other, and consequently presupposing some resurrection or other, supplies internal evidence, that the judgment in question is that of the last day, properly so called, and the resurrection presupposed by it, is the general or catholic resurrection. First, the subjects of this dispensation are, *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*—that is, *all the nations* ; which cannot imply less than the whole of mankind, the entire complex of moral and responsible beings, either then alive, or previously dead. All these, it is said, shall be brought together at once before their Judge, on this occasion ; in order to which effect, it would be obviously necessary both that those who were alive at the time, in every part of the world where moral and responsible beings were to be found, should be collected together from all these quarters, upon one locality or spot ; and that those who were previously dead, should first be raised to life again, and then assembled together with the living, on the same spot.

Again, it is reasonably to be inferred from verse 41, that the fire which, as the end and close of the process of their judgment, receives the reprobate upon this occasion, receives the Devil and his angels also ; in other words, that the day of doom to the wicked and reprobate, among moral and responsible human beings, upon this occasion, is the day of doom to the evil angels likewise ; and the same event which consummates the period of toleration to human wickedness in particular, consummates it also to the power and agency of evil generally ; which being the case, the judgment in question is the general judgment, followed by the consummation of all things ; because that is the period defined in the Book of Revelation ^a, for the final coercion and proper punishment both of evil angels and of evil men.

^a xx. 7—15: Cf. 2 Pet. ii. 4: Jude 6. Also Mark i. 24: Luke iv. 34: Matt. viii. 29: Mark v. 7: Luke viii. 18. 31. Also Justin M. Apol. i. p. 45. l. 19. sqq.

Lastly—the different effects of the same dispensation to their proper subjects, on this occasion, are equally everlasting and unchangeable with respect to each; the righteous depart into life everlasting, as the effect of their proper sentence, the reprobate into punishment everlasting, as the consequence of theirs; which too is another criterion of such a dispensation as that of the general judgment, preparatory to, and followed by, the consummation of all things as they exist at present; and the commencement and decursus of an endless eternity.

To these arguments others might be added, tending to prove the same conclusion, that the description of these proceedings is the description of the solemnity of the last day, properly so called; if indeed there were any necessity to establish a conclusion, which every commentator on the prophecy, I apprehend, would be disposed to admit without a question. It is of more importance to the right understanding of the description, considered as that of the proceedings at the last day, that it should be well ascertained to what class of subjects it was intended to apply; whether to Christians in particular, as well as moral agents in general, or to the latter in contradistinction to the former. When I declare it to be my belief that not a single Christian, or rather not a single individual, who, whether as a Christian or not, was at any time a professing member of the visible church, in its state of probation on earth, was intended by the Speaker to be comprehended among these subjects, I doubt not I shall be thought to advocate a novel opinion; and one which, I am well aware, it may be no easy thing to establish satisfactorily to such as may hear it proposed for the first time. Nor would my limits allow me to enter upon the discussion of this point, as minutely as the difficulty of the subject, and the novelty of the opinion advanced upon it, would render desirable. All that I can do at present is briefly to mention a few of the arguments, which weigh with me to produce the conviction in question.

First, the doctrine of a first resurrection, as I before observed, rests on the same scriptural authority, as the doctrine of a second; and there is the same reason from revelation to expect that a part of mankind will rise at one time, as that the rest of mankind will rise at another.

Again, it may be taken for granted, that the resurrection of

the dead, under any circumstances, must be preparatory to their judgment; and their judgment, to the dispensation of their proper reward, or their proper punishment. If then there must be a first resurrection, there must be a first judgment; and if a first judgment, a first dispensation of reward or punishment. If a certain part of mankind, but not the rest, are to be the subjects of the resurrection, in this first instance; a part of mankind, and not the rest, are to be the subjects of the judgment, and of the dispensation of reward or punishment consequent upon it.

Thirdly, the Book of Revelation not only certifies the fact of a first resurrection, confined to a portion of mankind, but to a certain extent defines the subjects of that dispensation, so far at least as to specify among them those who had suffered martyrdom, for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God; and such as had not worshipped the beast, nor his image, nor received his mark on their forehead, and on their hand, xx. 4; both which are descriptions of Christians—the former of Christians already dead, and therefore properly requiring to be raised to life again; the latter, not necessarily of dead Christians, but of such as might still be living, and preserving their faith in Christ, even in the time of the great apostasy, up to the very moment of the return of Christ in person. That one class, then, of the subjects of the first resurrection are Christians properly so called, appears from the testimony of the Book of Revelation; that there may be, or rather there must be, another class of those subjects, personally distinct from Christians, yet designed as much as Christians to partake in the effects of the resurrection itself—appears from the nature of the event to which this resurrection is preliminary, according to the Book of Revelation, compared with the testimony of the parables, and of other parts of the Gospels, already considered. This event is the millenary dispensation—and we have had our Saviour's assurance, that in the millenary dispensation, not only Christians of every clime and nation, but the patriarchs, prophets, and holy men of the ancient dispensation—are designed to partake in common. Laying all these intimations together, the most correct view which we can form of the nature and final end of the millenary dispensation, as I argued indeed in its proper place elsewhere, is that of an œconomy or state of things in which every member of the visible church, both nominal and real—from the first period of its existence upon earth, to the time of its transition into the invi-

sible—has an equal interest and concern; the real, as being destined alike to share in the benefit of its effects, the nominal, as being alike to be excluded from all participation in them. To such a dispensation it must be obviously necessary that all who have been members of the church in its state of probation, before the millenary period arrives, should be brought together and assembled in conjunction, in order to that separation of one part from the other, which will determine who are to be members of the same church in its state of retribution, and who are not; and consequently that so far the living at the time cannot prevent the dead; but that such as are dead will be raised to life again, in order to be brought together and assembled, with a view to a common effect, as soon as the living themselves.

Fourthly, this issue of things we have seen to be represented in a variety of the parables which have come under our review; all concurring in one characteristic result, that by whatsoever image the millenary dispensation and its effects were adumbrated, among the same complex of persons, all equally concerned and interested in that dispensation and in those effects beforehand—(a complex which, under the circumstances of the case, could be understood of nothing but the aggregate of the members of the visible church, through every stage of its existence from first to last)—one part was invariably supposed to be admitted to a participation in those effects at last, and another part invariably to be excluded therefrom.

Fifthly, the same testimony of the Book of Revelation declares that over those who are raised as the proper subjects of the first resurrection, and by parity of reason, over those who are destined to be the proper subjects of the happiness and the privileges of the millenary dispensation, the second death has no power. If so, as I argued on a former occasion*, the final acceptance of this part of mankind at least, that is, of the truly good and faithful, who have been at any time members of the visible church, in its state of probation, whether among Jews or Christians, must be already secure: and it would be directly at variance with such an assurance to suppose that they can yet have their trial to undergo, at the last day, among the complex of moral agents in general. This argument, I think, must be decisive to one effect; viz. that among the proper subjects of

* Vol. i. p. 265.

the process of judgment and its consequences, described, Matt. xxv. 31—41, if that be a description of the proceedings at the last day, none can be included, whether Jews or Christians, who have previously partaken of the benefit of the millenary dispensation.

Sixthly, to suppose, indeed, that after devoting so large a portion of the discourse to the particular description of the œconomy both of probation and of retribution, in which Christians, as Christians, were more especially interested, as is comprehended between Matt. xxiv. 45, where this subject was properly begun, and Matt. xxv. 30, where it was finally suspended—our Saviour would again resume it, at Matt. xxv. 31, by passing to a description of proceedings, manifestly intended for those of the solemnity of the final judgment, in which Christians as Christians were to be just as much concerned, as any other moral agents whatsoever; would be to suppose a degree of tautology or repetition, which, under no circumstances, could we conceive to be capable of characterizing *his* discourses; much less so soon after the full and particular exemplification of the same future truths, in their special application to the proper persons, which had just preceded. It was very probable, however, that a prophecy like this of the mount, which extends through a number of cognate, and intermediate events, to the very verge of the consummation of all things, would finally be concluded with a prospect of that; and having done with the doctrine of a particular scheme of probation, and a corresponding scheme of retribution, expressly applicable to the case of Christians, that the Speaker would pass to the more general scheme of probation, and the more general corresponding scheme of retribution, applicable to the case of moral and responsible beings universally.

Seventhly, the words πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, which specify the proper subjects of this whole dispensation, will bear to be rendered *all the Gentiles*, as much as *all the nations*: the former of which versions, understood in the scriptural sense of the terms, would directly oppose all those who were at no time members of the visible church, whether among Jews or among Christians, to all those who were.

Eighthly, St. Paul has told us, 1 Cor. vi. 3, that among other things still to be fulfilled, the saints, by whom he means Christians, shall judge angels: an assertion, which in my opinion is

most satisfactorily to be explained, by supposing it to mean, that the saints will be present at the solemnity of the last day, not as parties to be tried, and to undergo a judgment of some kind or other themselves; but like the holy angels, as followers in the train, and attendants on the person of the great Judge himself, and consequently spectators of all that passes; and like the holy angels in some manner or other, it may be, instrumental to the result: which if the final condemnation of the Devil and his angels is to take place at the same time with that of wicked men, may be said in one sense to be equivalent to the saints' sitting in judgment even upon angels.

Ninthly, allowing only that every thing will come to pass, at the time to which this description alludes, exactly as our Saviour here foretells and declares that it shall; especially that what is said to pass between himself and the righteous, or between himself and the reprobate, will be literally fulfilled in the event; I cannot reconcile this part of the description more particularly, with what Matt. vii. 22, 23, specifies of the circumstances of some last day also, if both occasions are supposed to be the same, and those who say what is recorded, Matt. vii. 22, are considered to be included among those who say what is recorded in Matt. xxv. 44. The former of these, however, are unquestionably to be regarded as Christians, though merely nominally such; and if they are distinct from the latter, then though these last may be moral and responsible agents in general, they cannot be such moral and responsible agents, as nominal Christians in particular.

Tenthly, making the same admission as before, that what our Saviour has said shall happen at the time to which this description refers, actually will do so; we must suppose that he will actually speak all that he declares he shall speak to the righteous, Matt. xxv. 34—36: and they will actually answer to him all which he declares they shall answer, Matt. xxv. 37—39. And so in the case of his reply to this answer itself, verse 40. The same must be supposed of his address to the reprobate—of their reply to it, and of his answer to that reply—all as recorded from xxv. 41—45. Now, with this admission beforehand, I would ask whether it can be supposed possible for such a dialogue as either of these, to pass, under any circumstances, between Jesus Christ, in his capacity of Judge, at the last day, and Christians, as those at that time brought before him to give

an account of their past actions? Is it possible, that any Christian, as such, with the light of this very description to instruct him in the knowledge of it, can be ignorant of this truth, this purely evangelical truth, and so characteristic of the first principles of Gospel morality and moral obligation, that the merit of good deeds done by him to any of his brethren, who stand in need of his assistance and relief, if imputed and rewarded at all, will be imputed and rewarded, as if done to Jesus Christ; nay, that they are required to be done, under such circumstances, to one of his brethren, for the sake of Jesus Christ; and if they are done to one of his brethren, under such circumstances, they are done in the love of Jesus Christ? Can any Christian, I say, be ignorant of this truth? Could any Christian, then, be surprised to be told of this truth at the day of judgment? as both the righteous and the reprobate in this description are plainly represented to be surprised, when told that the one had done, and the other had neglected to do, such and such things in behalf of their Judge, which it appears the former had done, the latter had neglected to do, in behalf of one or other of their brethren in the flesh. I confess that if this part of the description of these proceedings is to be literally understood—it seems to me to involve an insuperable difficulty, supposing that Christians in any sense are the parties addressed by the Speaker, and the parties who return him the answer in either of these dialogues, and more especially in the first of the two; but not, if the persons concerned both in the address of the Speaker, and in the answer returned to it, are such moral agents, as though accountable and responsible beings, were left in the days of their probation, only to the light of nature, and to the law of conscience; and either never heard, or never professed, the name of Jesus Christ.

Eleventhly, it must appear an extraordinary omission that in an account professedly regarding the final judgment of Christians, and defining the proper specific grounds of their admission to, or their exclusion from, their eternal reward, no mention should be made of the most indispensable of all requisites to the acceptance and salvation of those, who have known and professed the name of Christ—the requisite of faith. With no special reference to the acceptance or rejection of Christians, this omission is just as consistent and natural, as it would be extraordinary and inconsistent with one. For what mention could be made of a faith in Christ, as the one thing needful to salva-

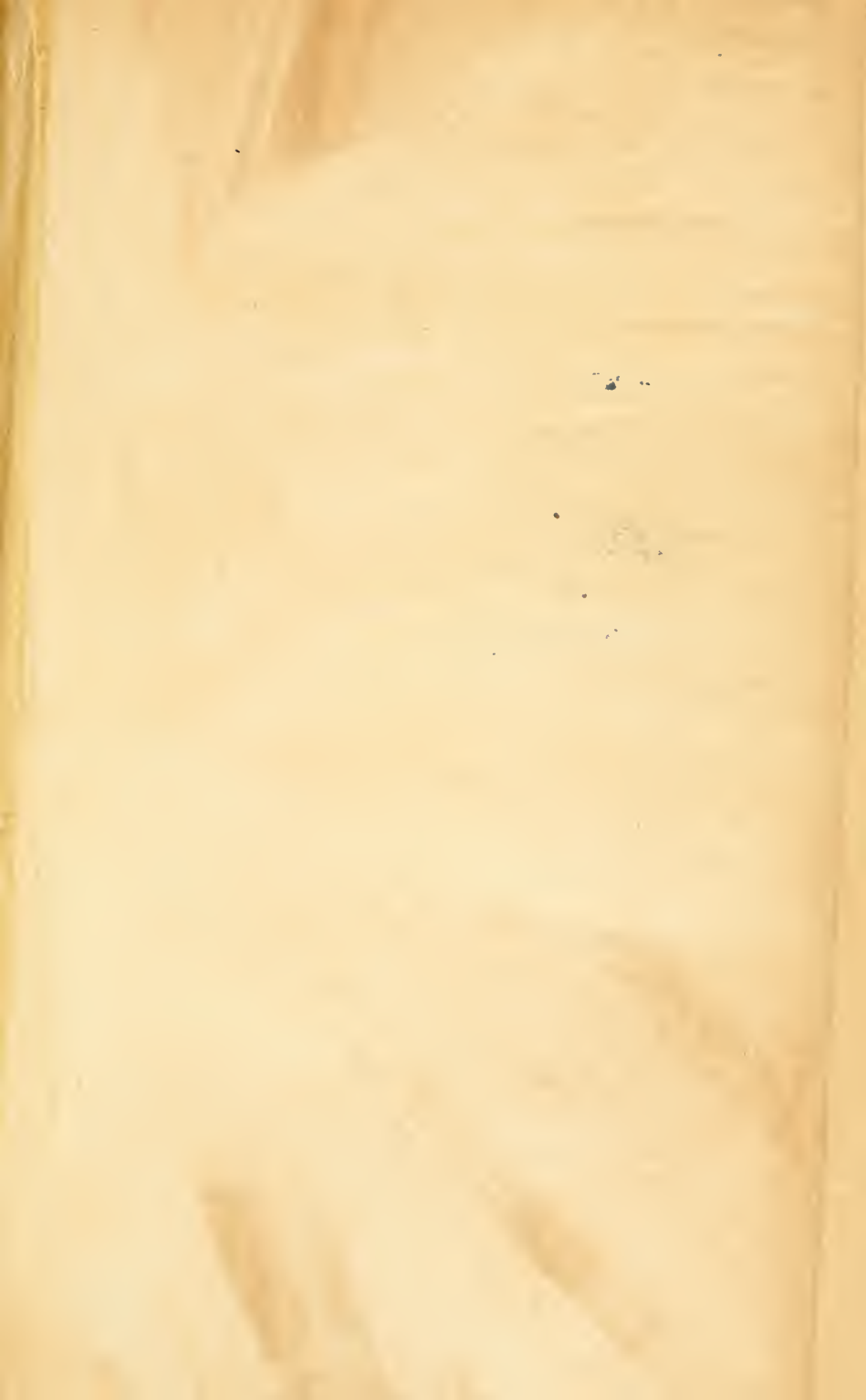
tion, on the question of the admission to everlasting happiness, of those who by the hypothesis, never heard of the name of Christ? Yet it is observable, that the ground or principle of desert, supposed to entitle even these to salvation at last, is placed as nearly as possible on the same foundation of a faith in Christ, as it could be, with such a previous ignorance of the name of Christ: viz. on the merit of such and such good deeds as though actually done to some one or more of their fellow men, are acknowledged as virtually done to Jesus Christ, and are rewarded to the doers, as if actually done to Jesus Christ.

Lastly, the principle of merit in question is supposed to be the same in behalf of all who are allowed the benefit of it, and in respect to all, who are denied the benefit of it; and whether more had been done, or more had been left undone, of the particular specified kind of good actions, in one individual case, compared with another, it is treated as alike effectual to entail upon the particular individual the necessary measure of desert, which entitled him to acceptance, or the necessary measure of ill desert, which consigned him to reprobation. We may ground this conclusion on the words *ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποιήσατε*, addressed to the one, and *ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε*, addressed to the other: for the proper meaning of *ἐφ' ὅσον* is not *in so much as*, but, *in so far as, to whatever extent*, or the like. And this construction is borne out by the context; for it is followed, in each instance, by *ἐνὶ τούτων, τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων*, that is, to “one of these,” even no more than unto one, “of these, my brethren, who are the least; that is, the least in external circumstances, the meanest, the humblest, the poorest, the most destitute and helpless, of your fellow men, my brethren according to the flesh.” None but such, it is evident, could be the proper subjects of the good offices previously enumerated. The construction here is parallel to Matt. v. 19: *ὅς ἐὰν οὖν λύσῃ μίαν τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων, τῶν ἐλαχίστων*—“These commandments, which are the least;” that is the least apparently, and in comparison of the weightier matters of the law; the iotas, in short, or tittles, mentioned in the verse before.

Now this supposed community of desert, in the subjects of the acceptance, would naturally prepare the way for the corresponding community of reward, supposed to be due to it. And such appears to be the case with the nature and degree of that reward, into which the righteous are finally received, by virtue

of a proper acceptance founded upon a proper imputed desert. The reward is one to all, as the desert imputed which produces it, is one to all. It is the same blessed inheritance of which all are commanded to take possession ; it is the same kingdom into which all are received ; the same life everlasting into which all depart ; but no more, as far as we can perceive, from any thing that is specified in relation to it. There is no allusion here, as in a multitude of other passages there may be shewn to be, to a difference of rewards in proportion to a difference of deserts. But those passages which speak of this difference, we have reason to believe, are intended of the millenary dispensation, and apply to the distinctions which may be made under that dispensation, as an œconomy of retribution in the degrees of reward, answering to the degrees of merit contracted by a previous œconomy of probation ; the subjects of which distinctions, therefore, can be only the members of the visible church. In that state, which is properly to be understood by the kingdom of heaven, and properly consequent upon the consummation of all things, we have no reason to believe, as I contended elsewhere, but rather every reason not to believe, that any difference will be made in the kind or measure of the reward, which one class of accepted moral agents will enjoy, compared with another ; but that all being treated alike with respect to the proper grounds of supposed desert, which entitles them to be accepted and rewarded at all, they will all be placed upon a par in the nature and degree of the reward bestowed upon it.

END OF VOL. V. PART I.



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